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WAR PAPERS

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THE UNITED STATES

VOLUME I

PORTLAND
THE THURSTON PRINT
1898

P R E F A C E

The papers in this volume are printed in the order in which they were read. Each author, however, is represented by only a single paper although he may have read two or more papers. The members of the publishing committee have confined their labors to the work of publication, and the authors of the papers are alone responsible for the statements made.

Selden Connor,
Henry S. Burrage, } *Committee.*
Edward M. Rand,

PORTLAND, February, 1898.

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MY CAPTURE AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

By Brevet Major HENRY S. BURRAGE.

NOVEMBER 1, 1864, my regiment, the 36th Massachusetts Volunteers, attached to the First Brigade, Second Division, Ninth Corps, was encamped near Fort Fisher, at the extreme left of our lines in front of Petersburg, Va. The night before I had received an order to report the next morning for duty as brigade officer of the day. At the appointed hour I was at brigade headquarters. In giving me my instructions General Curtin said, "You will not allow the men on the picket line to exchange papers, but if an opportunity for such an exchange occurs you are at liberty to avail yourself of it, and bring the papers to me." I at once sent word to the officers on the picket line that there would be no exchange of papers except by the brigade officer of the day.

Half an hour later, with the division officer of the day, Lieutenant-Colonel Getchell of the 31st Maine Volunteers, I made my way to the left of the brigade line, and commenced an inspection of the posts. Proceeding toward the right we at length came to a road which, crossing our line in a thick growth of timber, passed also through the enemy's line. At the picket post on this road we found a lieutenant, who called our attention to a Confederate officer as we supposed, standing with a paper in his hand, about a hundred yards distant at a bend of the road, evidently waiting for some one to come out from our lines and exchange, as had been almost the daily custom at that point for some time. Leaving the division officer of the day at the picket post, I walked down the road and met the Confederate officer. He had three Richmond papers, while I had a single Washington paper. "Have you a *Sunday Morning Chronicle*?" asked the Confederate officer. "I can get you one," I answered. "Very well," he said, "I will give you these

three Richmond papers if you will give me your Washington paper, and also bring out the *Sunday Morning Chronicle* this afternoon." I assented, took his papers, gave him my paper, and as I was turning to go back to my lines, I asked him his rank and regiment. He said he was the major of the 2d Mississippi.

Having completed my rounds, I carried the papers I had received from the rebel officer to General Curtin's headquarters. In the afternoon, on revisiting the picket line, I took with me a copy of the *Sunday Morning Chronicle*, as I had promised. On coming to the post in front of which I had made the exchange in the morning, I learned that the Confederate officer had not as yet reappeared. So I waited awhile; but still he did not come. Thinking that possibly he expected I would call him out on revisiting my line, I asked the lieutenant at the post if he was acquainted with the ground in his front. He said he was, and informed me that soon after passing the bend in the road, just beyond the place where I had exchanged papers in the morning, I would be in sight of the Confederate picket posts, seventy-five or a hundred yards distant.

Accordingly unfolding my paper, I walked down the road, passed the angle, and finding myself in sight of the Confederate outposts, halted and waved the paper. A Confederate soldier left the post on the road, as I supposed to inform the officer in command of my presence. With him he returned two or three minutes later. Then the soldiers in the pits in the road and on either side stood up, leveled their muskets, and the officer called out, "Come in, or we'll fire!"

To attempt to escape was of course useless. As I made my way toward the rebel pickets, however, I supposed that after a few words of explanation I would be permitted to return to my lines. But an officer demanded my sword and without heeding my protest he hurried me off to the headquarters of Colonel Cowan, then commanding Lane's brigade in General Lane's absence. Colonel Cowan, after listening to my story, said the

picket ought not to have made the capture, but as I had seen so much of his line on my way to his headquarters, he did not feel warranted in allowing me to return ; and so he sent me to General Heth, a division commander, whose headquarters were on the Boydton Plank Road, near Fort Gregg.

On my arrival there I found that General Heth was absent inspecting his picket line, and it was an hour or more before he returned. When at length he came in, and I was brought before him by the guard, it was evident that he was in a somewhat ruffled state of mind, for he declined to listen to my story and said, "There is no intercourse between my people and your people. You will be held as a prisoner of war."

The guard was then ordered to take me to General A. P. Hill, at that time in command of all the Confederate forces south of the Appomattox. General Hill's headquarters were near the house of Mr. J. M. Venable, just outside of Petersburg on what was known, I think, as the River Road. Colonel Palmer, General Hill's adjutant-general, received my statement in reference to the capture, and after reporting to the general informed me that the case would be investigated, and that if the facts were as I had stated, I would be returned in a few days to my own lines. He then dismissed the guard, and on my giving my word that I would not attempt to escape, assigned me quarters with Dr. Hamilton, a surgeon on General Hill's staff.

The doctor, who was a former resident of Baltimore, if I remember rightly, I found to be a courteous gentleman, and he gave me a soldier's welcome. I remained at General Hill's headquarters two days. No one could have been treated more kindly. I was allowed the largest liberty. The members of the staff and other officers visiting headquarters talked with me freely, and I was assured that it was the general's purpose to send me back to my own lines after a short delay. Letters were brought to me addressed to Confederate prisoners at the North, and I was asked to forward them through the mail on my return. Mr. Venable daily sent me food from his own

table, and I was greatly enjoying my stay at the Confederate headquarters, when on the afternoon of November 3, while I was talking, in Dr. Hamilton's tent, with a group of officers with whom I was going over some of the battles of the war, an officer entered and said I would be held as a prisoner, and that a guard was already in waiting to take me away. The officers present, including Dr. Hamilton, expressed their surprise at this announcement, and said they could give no explanation of the change that had occurred in General Hill's mind. I thanked them for their kind attentions, gave back the letters which had been intrusted to me, and, not a little perplexed at the sudden change in my prospects, accompanied the guard, as in a cold drizzling rain he conducted me down the road toward Petersburg.

Before we reached the city, and soon after passing a Confederate hospital, I heard some one behind us calling, "Captain, Captain!" Turning round I saw a colored man hurrying toward us, who as he came up said, "The colonel wishes to see you." Who the colonel was he could not tell, but he pointed back to the hospital and I knew he referred to some one there. I asked the guard if he would allow me to go back, and ascertain what was wanted. He was at first unwilling, as he said his orders were not to allow me to speak with any one; but at length he consented with the understanding that the delay should be brief. When we reached the hospital a little group of Confederate officers, standing in the doorway of a small building on the opposite side of the street — evidently the office of the surgeons connected with the hospital — beckoned to me to come over. As it was not unfrequently the custom of our opponents during the war to confiscate the boots, money, watches, etc., of their prisoners, it occurred to me that possibly I was about to be called upon to part with some of my possessions, and I declined to accept their eager invitation, answering the call by a shake of the head. But they were persistent in their purpose. "Come over," they said; "we wish to see you?" The meaning of such urgency I could not

conjecture; but moved by the appeal I finally concluded to trust them, and accompanied by the guard crossed the street. "Come in," they said. The guard was requested to remain without, and meekly obeyed. Entering, as the door closed I found myself in the presence of several doctors and a few wounded Confederate officers.

"We have heard of your case, Captain," said one of the latter. "I am not a Christian, but I believe in doing unto others as I would have others do to me. I am told you belong to a Massachusetts regiment in the Ninth Corps." "Yes, sir; I replied. "Well," he continued, "I am Colonel of the — South Carolina. I was in the fort at the blowing up of Burnside's mine, July 30, went up with the cannon, timber and dirt, and came down as you see me here;" and he pointed to his arm, which was in a sling, and had evidently been severely injured. "Now South Carolina hates Massachusetts mightily," he continued, "and you may fight me as much as you please, but if you please never blow me up again!" With a nod I answered this harmless pleasantry.

The facts in reference to my capture were then drawn out by different officers in the group. At length one of the doctors said, "Captain, you have no overcoat." "Yes, I have," I replied, "but unfortunately it is on the other side of the line." "Well," he added, "I am a graduate of the Harvard Medical School. As you came from Massachusetts take my overcoat," and he commenced to take off a new gray overcoat he was wearing. "You are very kind, Doctor," I replied, "but this is a Confederate coat, and you know I would not be allowed to keep it. I thank you, however, as much for your kindness, as though it were really mine." A captain who was standing near said, "But you would have no objection to one of your own coats?" "Certainly not," I replied. He then called a soldier, and in a few moments one of our own army overcoats which had been colored a butternut brown was brought in, and though it was made for a much larger man, it was none the less a welcome gift on that cold, cheerless November day.

By this time the guard was pounding loudly on the door. He would not wait any longer, he said. Thanking the little group of doctors and officers for their kindness, which was a mystery to me then, and has been ever since, I went out into the drizzling rain, and soon was in the streets of Petersburg.

"If you want anything to eat, you will do well to get it before you go farther," said the guard. So we stopped at a restaurant, where for a small gold coin which I had long carried as a pocket-piece, I obtained a moderate lunch, but the best doubtless that such an establishment in Petersburg at that time could afford. How the eyes of the keeper sparkled as the shining coin found its way into his hand! He had not seen the like for many a day.

The guard then conducted me to the jail, where I was delivered to the provost-marshal, and my prison life began. I was placed in a large, dirty room already well-crowded with negroes. A more filthy den I have never seen, and I do not think another like it could have been found in the Confederacy. Here I spent the night with no covering, as I laid down at length upon the unswept floor, except the overcoat which had so strangely come into my possession.

The next day I was sent to Richmond. The distance is twenty miles, but a large part of the day was consumed in making the journey, so slowly did the train make its way, and so frequent and long were the stops. It was at the close of the day, November 4, that I entered the Libby. Dick Turner, and a rebel sergeant of kindred spirit, made the customary search, showing themselves adepts in rifling pockets, shaking one's boots, etc. My money they took, but for some reason unknown I was allowed to retain my watch. When the search was completed and my name had been written in the prison-records, I reminded Dick Turner, whom I did not know as well then as afterwards, that I had eaten nothing since morning, and then only a piece of bread; but with a growl he declined to break my fast, and I was ushered up the staircase through the trap-door to the second floor of the prison, where from the little

group of Union officers around the stove, I was received with the usual prison salutation, "Fresh fish!"

The Libby, in comparison with the prison at Petersburg, was a palace. There was little or no glass in the windows, however, and the old bagging which had been nailed up to keep out the wind and cold only partially fulfilled that duty. A few sticks of wood were furnished each day for a fire, but for the most part the stove afforded us only cold comfort.

A few days after my arrival in the Libby I succeeded in obtaining from the guard for a dollar a sheet of letter-paper, and prepared a statement of the facts concerning my capture. This I handed to Dick Turner at roll-call, addressed to General Lee. I had very grave doubts whether the document would reach its destination, but I made the venture, not expecting that it would secure my release, but desiring if possible to be made acquainted with the reason, or reasons, why General Hill had at last given orders for my retention as a prisoner of war.

Several weeks passed, and I had almost come to the conclusion that my communication had in some way miscarried when, on the twenty-eighth of November, my statement was returned well covered with endorsements. I learned from these that General Lee received the communication, and sent it to General Hill with a request for his statement of the case. General Hill, in a lengthy endorsement, replied that my statement was the same which I made when I was brought to his headquarters on the day of my capture. But on investigating the case, he said, he found that the major of the 2d Mississippi, with whom I claimed to have exchanged papers that morning, had been absent, wounded, for months. Furthermore, there was firing on that part of the line that afternoon, he said, and General Heth was of the opinion that I was out under the guise of exchanging papers, looking over the ground, preparatory to an attack on the Confederate line, in retaliation for the capture of the picket line of the Second Corps by Mahone, a night or two before. From these facts, he continued, I considered him a prisoner of war fairly captured, and forwarded him as such. General Lee

in his endorsement said, that from these facts, as set forth by General Hill, he failed to see why I should not be regarded as a prisoner of war fairly captured.

I go back now to the day of my capture. The lieutenant on the post in front of which the capture was made, finding that I did not return, reported the fact to General Curtin, who at once sent a staff officer to the picket line to look over the ground and obtain additional facts if possible concerning the capture. In due time an announcement of the capture reached General Meade, at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac. Without seeking any further information in reference to the affair, General Meade issued an order, November 7, dismissing me from the service for having, in violation of repeated orders, held communication with the enemy by an interchange of newspapers.

The order in due time reached brigade headquarters, but before promulgating it, General Curtin, in a letter, called General Meade's attention to the fact that when the orders against the exchange of newspapers to which he referred were issued, I was absent from the army on account of wounds received in action, as was he also himself; that on our return to duty the exchange of newspapers was a matter of almost daily occurrence, General Meade's own staff officers often participating in such exchanges; that accordingly he had every reason to believe I had no knowledge of the existence of any such orders, indeed that he himself had no knowledge of such orders until he received the order dismissing me from the service; and he therefore hoped for these reasons, and also on account of my previous good record as an officer, which he placed before the commanding general, that General Meade would withdraw the order. General Meade, however, was immovable, and the order having reached the War Department received the formal approval of the President, an announcement of which was made November 12, in special orders from the adjutant-general's office in Washington.

I am sure I do not in the least overstate the fact when I say that the promulgation of General Meade's order awakened not a little indignation among my brother officers of the 36th Massachusetts Volunteers, who were as jealous of a comrade's good name as they were of their own; and they at once set on foot measures for the vindication of my character and conduct. Though General Meade had refused to allow any weight to the facts presented by General Curtin, it was believed that the President would show a different spirit. The great right of petition was theirs, and they hastened to avail themselves of it. In a communication to the President, after referring to General Meade's order dismissing me from the service, they called attention to the fact that General Meade's orders against the exchange of newspapers were issued while I was absent from the regiment on account of wounds received at the battle of Cold Harbor, and that attention had not been called to such orders since my return. In view of my ignorance of General Meade's orders forbidding the exchange of newspapers, and of my standing as an officer, they respectfully requested the President to revoke General Meade's order dismissing me from the service, or so to amend it that I might have an opportunity to make personal defense.

This petition was signed by all of the officers in the regiment, and was approved at brigade, division and corps headquarters. As nothing was heard from it, it was for some time thought that General Meade stopped this petition at his headquarters, and February 4, 1865, a second petition, approved at brigade and division headquarters, was endorsed at corps headquarters with these words :

"A paper of similar import was forwarded through the regular channel, December 1, 1864, but hearing nothing from it in reply I now take the liberty to divert this from the proper channel.

"John C. Parke, Major-General."

General Meade, however, had not stopped the petition, but in forwarding it he expressed his disapproval in a lengthy letter, in which he begged the President to allow the order to stand.

He admitted that the exchange of newspapers at Petersburg had become a matter of frequent occurrence, and that his own staff officers were as guilty as any ; but the good of the service, he claimed, rendered the order necessary, and he closed his communication with the suggestive words that Mr. Lincoln would bear him witness that he had not been accustomed to ask for favors.

Meanwhile my friends at home, after learning from the regiment the facts that have already been recounted, had not been inactive. The aid of our representative to Congress, Honorable Alexander H. Rice, and of both of the senators from Massachusetts, Honorable Charles Sumner and Honorable Henry Wilson, was early invoked. Colonel William F. Draper¹ of my regiment, also, who had been severely wounded at the Wilderness, and had now been mustered out of the service, wrote from his home at Hopedale, Mass., to Governor Andrew :

“I know nothing of the circumstances, and I do not wish to uphold the captain in ‘disobedience to orders,’ but I do wish to say a word in relation to his former good character, and to urge that if it is possible something may be done to commute this terrible sentence — I say terrible, because it is much worse than the same punishment would be under ordinary circumstances. The captain is held a prisoner, suffering all that our soldiers in rebel prisons suffer, with his name struck from the rolls of our army. For that reason he is not liable to exchange, and he is obliged to endure the sufferings of prison life with the feeling that his name is forever disgraced by the government for which he is suffering.”

To this appeal, and others like it, the large-hearted war governor responded, and three days later, November 22, he addressed a ringing letter to President Lincoln, asking for a reconsideration of his approval of General Meade’s order. Referring to my unhappy position he said :

“He is a prisoner in the hands of the rebels, and has had no opportunity whatsoever to be heard in his own defense. Whatever may be the offense with which he is charged, or whatever may be

¹ General Draper is now (1897) Ambassador to Italy.

his degree of culpability, I do not inquire ; but I base my request upon the alleged fact that he has been summarily dismissed the service while a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, and thus no opportunity for a hearing in his own defense has been afforded to him, nor any chance for explanation. If he has been guilty of any military crime, no word of mine shall interpose between him and punishment ; but in his behalf, under circumstances so hard and peculiar, as the governor of his state and the signer of the commission of which the order for his dismissal deprives him, I most respectfully remonstrate against such order as it stands, and pray as a matter of justice the reconsideration of it, and its suspension until he may be exchanged and placed in a position where defense or explanation may be possible. His character as a citizen and a gentleman at home is such as to render the belief almost impossible that his supposed error admits no defense."

Papers of like import, from persons high in public and private life, were also addressed to the President. Mr. Lincoln at length sent these documents to General Meade, evidently in the hope that the latter would relieve him of the necessity of acting in opposition to his expressed wishes. But General Meade was still inexorable, and asked, as before, that his order might be allowed to stand.

At length Honorable Alexander H. Rice, then, as I have said, a member of Congress from Massachusetts, afterwards governor of the state, called the attention of Secretary Stanton to the case. The latter suggested such obstacles in the way of exchange — which was asked in order that I might have an opportunity to defend myself — that Mr. Rice concluded to go directly to the President. He went alone and found the President alone. When Mr. Rice made known his errand, Mr. Lincoln said in kindness, but at the same time with some signs of weariness, that he was familiar with the case, and though it was one of peculiar hardship he could not attend to individual cases of this kind. He had no doubt but that there were a great many cases of peculiar hardship in the Army of the Potomac, and he added, "It is all that I can do to hear cases in classes and those belonging to each class must abide by the

decision made for that class." Mr. Rice replied that he appreciated the President's position, but he thought that if he would give his attention to this case he would find it so peculiar that it must stand alone, and that accordingly the President in hearing it would not depart from his rule. Mr. Lincoln, as Mr. Rice was wont to tell the story, leaned back in his chair, crossed his knees, and said, "Mr. Rice, go on."

Mr. Rice saw that he had the ear of the President, and reviewed the case at length, referring to the circumstances under which I enlisted, recalling my war record and dwelling on the fact that innocent of the charge of violating orders, I had been summarily dismissed from the service while a prisoner in the hands of the enemy and without any opportunity of making personal defense. "And now," he said in conclusion, "I ask, Mr. President, is it right to leave him there? Is this a fitting reward for more than two years of faithful service?"

"I wish," said Mr. Lincoln, "you would go over to the War Department, and state this case to General Hitchcock just as you have stated it to me, and say to him that if he can effect the exchange of this officer I desire that it shall be done."

Mr. Rice suggested a possible difficulty from the fact that the order of General Meade dismissed me from the service, and on this account, on the part of the Confederates there might be an objection to the exchange. The President replied, "Say to General Hitchcock, in case he raises that point, that if he can take care of the exchange, I think I can take care of the rank."

Mr. Rice at once made his way to the War Department, saw General Hitchcock, and stated the case as the President requested. General Hitchcock said he was familiar with it, but raised the point which Mr. Rice had anticipated. Mr. Rice then delivered the President's message, and General Hitchcock replied, "If the President will restore this officer to his rank, I can effect his exchange." Mr. Rice asked General Hitchcock to state this in a note to the President. He did so and Mr. Rice returned to the White House. Near the entrance

he met Colonel John Hay, one of the President's private secretaries. As he placed General Hitchcock's note in his hand, Colonel Hay, as he glanced at it, said, "Burrage, was he at Brown University in 1857-58?" Mr. Rice replied that I was graduated at Brown in 1861. "I knew him in college," said Colonel Hay, "I will take this to the President at once." On his return from the President's office a few minutes later he informed Mr. Rice that the President had revoked General Meade's order, and restored me to my rank. The official order announcing the revocation was issued at the War Department, February 7, 1865.

While in the Libby I learned from an item in a Richmond paper of my dismissal from the service for disobedience of orders. My surprise can well be imagined, but I was sure the wrong would be wiped out when the facts were understood. I did not believe that comrades whose fidelity I had long proved would silently allow me to suffer even the slightest injustice, much less dismissal from the service upon statements which they knew to be without foundation. Yet, as may be easily inferred, the item did not make my prison life any more agreeable.

My mind was somewhat relieved, however, when a few days later, in another Richmond paper, I found that Roger A. Pryor, formerly a Confederate brigadier, but then attached to General Lee's headquarters without a commission, had been captured in retaliation for my capture, and sent to Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor.

After my capture, as I subsequently learned, it was understood on the picket line that the first Confederate officer found approaching our lines for the purpose of exchanging newspapers should be captured in retaliation for my capture. For a while the enemy made no attempt to exchange on that part of the line. November 27, however, a Confederate approached our lines near where I was captured, and waved a paper as a token of a desire to exchange. Captain H. O. Dudley of the 11th

New Hampshire, who on that day was in command of the picket line at that point, advanced to meet him, and as the two approached, the captain drew his revolver, and ordered the Confederate to move toward our lines, saying that he made the capture in retaliation for my capture. The prisoner proved to be Roger A. Pryor.

On that day General Parke, commanding the Ninth Corps, addressed a note to army headquarters, in which he said : "I have the honor to forward a prisoner of war, Roger A. Pryor, captured on our lines, in retaliation for the capture of Captain Henry S. Burrage, 36th Massachusetts, on the first instant." General Meade at once called on General Parke for a minute report of all the circumstances connected with the capture of Pryor, "giving the names of every officer and soldier taking part in the capture." It might be supposed that General Meade wished to compliment those who had a part in Pryor's capture, but it will appear later that he had a very different purpose in view. Captain Dudley, who captured Pryor, made the following report in answer to General Meade's request. It was dated November 27, 1864, the day of Pryor's capture, and was as follows :

"I have the honor to report that private Roger A. Pryor, 3d Virginia Cavalry, was captured in front of our picket line, near Doctor Boisseau's house, under the following circumstances: Lieutenant Durgin, 32d Maine Volunteers, who was on the right of the line, noticed this man several times between the lines waving papers and importuning our men to come out and exchange. The lieutenant sent to the left of the line for me, and when I came up this man (Pryor) came out from their lines and, waving his papers, beckoned me to come out and meet him. Mistaking him for an officer, I expressed the intention to the officers about me to go out and take him prisoner in retaliation for Captain Burrage, who was taken by the enemy in front of the picket line of the First Brigade under similar circumstances. I immediately went out to meet him, and shook hands with him, telling him at the same time that he might consider himself my prisoner, in retaliation for Captain Burrage. He made an attempt to draw his revolver, which I anticipated and prevented,

when he said, as he was under our guns he would submit, and I took him inside our lines without further trouble, and sent him under guard to brigade headquarters."

In a letter to General Parke, dated November 29, 1864, General Meade referred to his order of June 9, 1864, in relation to intercourse with the enemy, and said: "The conduct of Captain Dudley, on the occasion in question, being in direct disregard of the order cited, is disapproved by the major-general commanding, and he regrets that it should have met with your approval."

The rebuke administered in this letter by General Meade both to General Parke and Captain Dudley was in harmony with his action in this whole matter. In all probability, however, Captain Dudley never knew that a rebuke was administered until he saw General Meade's letter in the Official Records of the war (Vol. 42, Part III, pp. 722, 723).

Not long after the item concerning Pryor's capture appeared in the Richmond papers, I learned from some of Pryor's friends, who called upon me in the Libby, that they desired in some way to effect his exchange. At the same time I was anxious to have an opportunity at the earliest possible moment of vindicating myself from the charge which General Meade had made in his order dismissing me from the service. Accordingly, soon after I was transferred to the prison in Danville, Va. (whither I was sent with other prisoners about the middle of December), I wrote to Governor Smith of Virginia, suggesting a parole, promising in my letter that if I could not secure Pryor's release, I would return to Richmond. In reply the governor wrote:

"An interview just had with Colonel Ould finds him ready, at any moment, to release you for Mr. Pryor, upon the ground, I presume, that you were improperly seized in the first place. He has so notified Colonel Mulford, and now awaits his response. If informed that General Pryor (general by courtesy only, since the resignation of his commission) will be at Varina, on any particular boat, he will have you there to be returned simultaneously with that gentleman.

You can hardly expect him to go further, as it obviates the necessity of the parole spoken of in your letter."

The governor closed his letter with the suggestion that "if instead of the order directing retaliatory measures General Grant had addressed a communication to General Lee the mistake would have been rectified without delay."

Several weeks after I received this communication, hearing nothing further concerning my release, I addressed a second letter to Governor Smith. In his reply, dated February 4, he said :

"I learn from Colonel Ould that he has received no answer to his proposition for the exchange or discharge of yourself and Mr. Pryor, and he thinks now, from the prolonged neglect of Colonel Mulford in the matter, that the response, when it does come, will be unfavorable. He has heard too—but not officially that I know of—that you have been dropped from the rolls of the United States Army for a violation of orders in communicating with our lines. Hoping, sir, that the information is incorrect, and that Colonel Mulford will soon call for you, I am," etc.

The order of the President revoking General Meade's order was dated February 7, 1865. On that day I received the above letter. Two days later it was known in the prison at Danville that a general exchange would soon take place. February 15, Colonel Smith, the Confederate officer in charge of the prison, received orders to send one thousand prisoners to Richmond for exchange. February 17, with the other officers at Danville—between four and five hundred—I was on my way to the Confederate capital. We were taken on our arrival to the Libby, where we remained until February 22. On that day—Washington's birthday, as we all remembered—we left Richmond, sailed down the James, and reentered our lines at Varina. It would be impossible with words to give expression to the joy we all felt in greeting once more the stars and stripes. The steamer, *George Leary*, was in waiting to receive us, and we were soon again on our way down the river.

Before the steamer reached City Point I asked Colonel Mulford, our commissioner of exchange, if it was true that I had

been dismissed the service. He said he was sorry to say that it was. Evidently he was unacquainted with President Lincoln's revocation of General Meade's order, as he made no allusion to it. I accordingly asked him if he would take a note to General Grant. He said he would, and I addressed a note to General Grant, saying I had learned that I had been dismissed from the service for disobedience of orders in exchanging papers, and I called for a court of inquiry as provided in the rules of the army.

Shortly after reaching Annapolis, where we were quartered for a few days, until we could be paid off, I found on the table of the reading-room, a copy of the *Boston Journal*. In glancing over its columns my eyes soon fell upon a despatch from "Perley" announcing the fact that President Lincoln had revoked General Meade's order, and restored me to my rank. How those few words thrilled me as I read them, and how eagerly I awaited tidings which I knew must soon reach me from those who had secured my vindication !

Receiving a leave of absence, with the rest of my fellow-prisoners, I returned to my home in Massachusetts. Governor Andrew offered me a major's commission in a new regiment then forming, but I preferred to remain in the 36th. When I rejoined my regiment, I found it at Farmville, not far from Appomattox. General Curtin's adjutant-general, Major Peckham, had been killed at Petersburg in the last assault a few days before, and knowing that I was expected to rejoin my regiment at an early day, and evidently wishing to repair any injustice that had been done to me by General Meade, General Curtin had reserved the vacant position for me, and kindly tendered it to me on my arrival. I accepted it, and remained on General Curtin's staff until the return of my regiment to Massachusetts.

The Ninth Corps, not long after the surrender of Lee, was ordered to Washington with the other corps of the Army of the Potomac. On our way to City Point, where we were to embark on transports, we passed through Petersburg.

The brigade encamped the night before a few miles from the city, and in the early morning, with a single orderly, I rode into Petersburg in advance of the troops in order to call on Mr. Venable, and in person thank him for his kindness to me when I was at General Hill's headquarters in the preceding autumn. I found him at home, and it was a gratification to me to do him a service, which, though slight, was heartily rendered, and, I think, as heartily appreciated. From Mr. Venable I learned the particulars of General Hill's death at Petersburg, in the assault of our troops on the second of April. I also learned from him that Roger A. Pryor was at home—his residence was then in Petersburg—and as he offered to introduce me, I accompanied him to General Pryor's home. General Pryor received me most courteously, and gave me the facts concerning his own capture. He said he had a talk with General Lee in reference to my capture, and urged my return on the ground that our men would certainly retaliate. The interview, which was to me one of very great interest, closed with what was evidently a fine piece of irony on the part of General Pryor. As I rose to go, he said, "Captain, I have in my library a book that once belonged to John Randolph of Roanoke, and has his autograph in it. I wish to give it to you;" and he stepped to his bookcase, and searched its shelves, but without success. At length turning to me he said, "I am sorry I do not find it, but your Corps, after the evacuation of Petersburg, were in the city, and some of the men went through my library. Possibly you may find the book among them. I give you liberty to take it wherever you find it." He doubtless intended I should know that his library had suffered not a little at the hands of the lovers of good literature in the Ninth Corps.

When I was in Richmond, Virginia, about the year 1880, I called at the library room of the Southern Historical Society, and while there I told the Reverend J. William Jones, D. D., the Secretary of the Society at that time, some of the facts connected with my capture. On the following day he told me that if I had waited a few minutes longer on the previous day, I

would have seen General Heth, who was passing through Richmond, and called at the library Doctor Jones said he told General Heth what I said about my capture, and General Heth said that the man with whom I exchanged papers on the day of my capture was a courier of General Joseph Davis, (who commanded a brigade in General Heth's division), and was not the major of the 2d Mississippi, as he falsely represented himself. It was this false representation on the part of the courier that led General Hill to hold me as a prisoner of war. The fact that the major of the 2d Mississippi had been wounded for months satisfied General Hill that my story could not be true. It is probable that General Lee was as ignorant of the facts in the case as was General Hill.

What were the reasons for General Meade's extraordinary course in this affair, I am unable to say. Those that have been given are utterly unworthy of a great soldier. Well was it for me that I had faithful friends in and out of the army, that Alexander H. Rice was at that time a member of Congress, that John A. Andrew was governor of Massachusetts, and especially that one who loved justice, as did Abraham Lincoln, was president of the United States.



A REMARKABLE RECONNAISSANCE.

By Major SIDNEY W. THAXTER.

ON the ninth of October, 1863, General Lee advanced from the south side of the Rapidan River by way of Madison court-house with the intention of attacking the Army of the Potomac, under General Meade, in the vicinity of Culpeper court-house.

The movement of the rebel army immediately became known to General Meade, and believing it was the purpose of General Lee to reach our rear by moving around our right flank, he withdrew his infantry to the north side of the Rappahannock, and instructed General Gregg, who, with his division of cavalry, had covered the right flank of the army in its retrograde movement, to observe and report any movement of the enemy. In accordance with these instructions from General Meade's headquarters, General Gregg directed Colonel Smith, commanding the 1st Maine Cavalry which had encamped on the night of October 11, in the vicinity of Sulphur Springs, on the Rappahannock, to proceed early on the morning of the twelfth, in a westerly direction by way of Amissville to Little Washington, and even Sperryville at the entrance to Thornton's Gap, and carefully observing the roads leading by our right flank to discover any movements the enemy was thought to be making by our flank or through the gaps of the Blue Ridge.

In accordance with these instructions, Colonel Smith moved with his regiment early on the morning of October 12, by way of Amissville, in a southwesterly direction toward the Blue Ridge, taking up a detachment of the 1st Maryland Cavalry. It was a bright, crisp morning, and as soon as we got the stiffness out of our fingers and warmth into our bodies, we began to appreciate the beauty of the mountains in our front, and the autumn colored woods on all sides of us. Soon, too, the

nervousness caused by the feeling that we might at any moment fall in with the enemy wore off, and men and officers gave themselves up to unrestrained enjoyment of the beautiful scenery on every side. The forenoon passed and there were no signs of the enemy. The roads showed no appearance of travel. The inhabitants truthfully told us they had seen nothing of Lee's army. Only a few scouts or guerillas were seen hanging about the mountains, either to observe and report our movements or to seize some thoughtless loiterer. These fellows were always looked upon with contempt by our soldiers. They were *sneak* soldiers, lurking in secret places to pick up incautious stragglers, waylaying ambulances and wagons, derailing trains, but seldom attacking or opposing armed forces. The value of their services was greatly overestimated. They soon lost their character as soldiers and became predatory bands, preying upon friends as well as enemies. As we proceeded we began to conjecture as to what had become of the enemy, whether he was marching through the gaps in the mountains or whether he had stopped his advance in the vicinity of Culpeper, and was not following our retreating army beyond that point. No one, not even those who were sure they heard guns, surmised that the enemy was in our rear.

We reached Little Washington soon after noon, and here the regiment halted while a detachment of about one hundred men continued the reconnoissance to Sperryville, six miles beyond Washington. Little Washington is the shire-town of Rappahannock County. It is prettily situated at the foot of the Blue Ridge, and is surrounded by a fertile country. It has a jail and court-house, and the day we fell upon it happened to be court-day, but owing to our sudden irruption the court unceremoniously adjourned and left for our officers a good dinner, which had been prepared for them at the hotel. I do not think any man of our regiment would have interfered with the doings of the court or the proper administration of justice, but for some reason they were suspicious of us and adjourned. While the regiment was awaiting the return of the detachment

sent to Sperryville, we were visited by some gentlemen from the town whom we obliged in various small ways, and upon whom, I trust, we made a good impression. I recollect one of the gentlemen inquired eagerly in regard to the election in Pennsylvania, which he thought had just taken place (but which was not due for a week) hoping, no doubt, that it would indicate that an important change was taking place in northern sentiment in regard to the continuance of the war. He could not have received any encouragement for his hope that year.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the detachment returned without finding any trace of the enemy. After allowing its members an hour's rest to feed and refresh themselves and their horses, we started on our return. When we reached Gaines' Cross Roads we took up a detachment that had been left there to watch the roads. This detachment, which had fresher men and horses, was sent to the head of the column and directed to push on to Sulphur Springs, and report the result of their reconnoissance to General Gregg, while the rest of the regiment halted and went into camp for the night near Amissville. But just before the place for our bivouac had been reached, without warning, out of the darkness and stillness of the night, came a terrific crash of musketry, and with it, helter-skelter, back upon the head of our column the detachment of the Maryland Cavalry which had the advance. The leading squadrons of the regiment were immediately deployed in the open ground, on either side of the road, to resist any attack which might be made. We were wholly ignorant of the force we had fallen in with, but one of our officers, who occupied higher ground than the column in the road, reported extensive camp-fires and the appearance of a large force in our front. The colonel acted promptly in extricating his regiment from the dangerous position it had fallen into. Each squadron was countermarched and the column in the road quietly withdrew in the direction they came from and the squadrons in the field were then withdrawn.

In the meantime inquiry was made at a house in the vicinity, and it was learned that A. P. Hill's Corps had been going into camp in that vicinity since three o'clock. A reconnoitering

party of the rebel infantry overtook the rear guard of our regiment, which had stopped to destroy a small bridge, and a part of them were captured. We were now in possession of information of the utmost importance to our army if it still remained in the vicinity of Rappahannock Station, and of vital importance if a part of it was south of the Rappahannock, as was the case ; for the rebel infantry had already overlapped ours in its march to our rear. The problem which was presented to our colonel to solve was how to get this information to General Meade's headquarters in the quickest time. The regiment itself was in no great danger. It could easily escape by making a wide detour ; but to reach army headquarters by a direct route was a more difficult task. I was strongly in favor of pushing for Waterloo, and crossing the river there, believing that the advance of Hill's Corps was no nearer that point than Amissville ; but our colonel decided otherwise, and, as subsequent events proved, correctly, for he was of the opinion that the advance of the rebel infantry was near Waterloo.

Having retraced our march as far as Gaines' Cross Roads we procured a negro guide, who conducted us by a farm road as far in the direction of Orleans as his knowledge of the way extended. In all our marching we had never gone over worse roads. It was a mere trail through woods and fields and over brooks. The regiment lost all semblance of order and continuity. Having reached the limit of our colored guide's knowledge of the way a new guide must be obtained, for although we had a good general knowledge of the country and roads we never could escape in the darkness of night from such an entanglement as this. A new guide was found in a middle-aged white man, who was routed out at midnight, and who at first was unable to tell whether we were Yankees or rebels. He was induced to accompany us and show us a road by which we might reach Warrenton, where we were confident we should find our troops.

If the way marked out for us by our colored guide was crooked and difficult, that through which our white guide led us was more so, and at times almost impassable for cavalry, so

rocky and precipitous was it. It lay over the range of hills which is a continuation of the Bull Run Mountains. After a struggle of several hours in the darkness of midnight we were brought to the top of a hill about five miles from Warrenton. Here we dismissed our guide with the present of an old horse and twenty dollars in money from the colonel, and then continued our march by a better defined road to the Waterloo pike. I was with the head of the column when it struck the main road, and my anxiety was quickly relieved to find no traces of travel on it. From this I inferred that we had overreached the advance of the rebels and could connect with our own forces without further risk. We marched rapidly toward Warrenton, with nothing to interrupt until we reached a steep hill, about two miles from the town, when all of a sudden there burst upon our view the smoldering camp-fires of a large force to the right and in front of us. Without halting in our march we discussed the situation and the probability of their belonging to our army. I was confident they were our troops. Colonel Smith was doubtful. Still, on we marched. An advanced guard was thrown out some distance in front of the main columns, and I went forward with them expecting each moment to meet a picket from our force, wishing that there should be no mistake in answering the challenge.

The regiment had now got within a half-mile of the camp-fires that were nearest the pike on our right when the colonel halted the column, determined to go no further until he could learn what force was in our front. When the column halted I, in my over-confidence, kept on until I was abreast the encampment nearest the road, and then turned into the field, and made for the nearest fires. Riding along the outskirts of the camp I saw from the wretched appearance of the horses and equipments that I had fallen among foes, but as there was no movement in the camp, and no alarm had been given, I had little cause to fear that I would be molested; so I cautiously approached on horseback two sleeping soldiers, who appeared to be covered with a piece of white shelter tent, and called out to them in

as suppressed and yet penetrating a tone as possible, "Hallo, there! What regiment is this?" But I got no answer. I again repeated my inquiry with a like lack of success. I did not dare to dismount and shake the sleep out of them, so I moved on to another soldier who was sleeping alone, and less soundly, as it proved. Putting the same question to him, I immediately had the reply, "The Twelfth." But this answer was not quite so explicit as I desired under the circumstances, for when I should return to my regiment and the colonel should ask me the result of my reconnaissance and I should report to him that the regiment encamped nearest the road was "the Twelfth," he would naturally ask, "The Twelfth what?" So I proceeded to elicit from my half-sleeping victim the state he came from by asking him, "The Twelfth what?" He turned on his grassy couch, and in a sort of you-just-let-me-alone and mind-your-own-business tone replied, "The 12th Virginia, you d——d fool." My inquiring disposition was fully satisfied and I left him with the quieting remark, "All right!"

Turning my horse, I left the encampment as speedily as possible, paying no attention to a demand that was sent after me by some camp-guard to "halt." As soon as I reached the pike, I pressed spurs to my weary horse and gave him quickly to understand that there was need of his utmost speed if we were to get the regiment out of its dangerous position. I quickly reached the head of the column and there found the colonel giving instructions to two men who had volunteered to go forward and find out what the force was in front of us. "Colonel," said I, "that is the 12th Virginia Cavalry." Without delay the fence was torn down on the north side of the road and the regiment quietly and quickly left the pike taking a northerly direction and leaving the town of Warrenton on our right. Having once reached the open country we had little to fear from any pursuit by the enemy, for the country was perfectly familiar to us and besides we had still two hours of darkness to screen our movement. About daylight we reached New Baltimore, about six miles to the north of

Warrenton. We found here none of our troops or of the enemy, and we pushed on to Gainesville, six miles further. Here for the first time our eyes were gladdened by the sight of our own troops. A messenger was sent to army headquarters to give the information we had obtained in regard to the position of the rebel infantry.

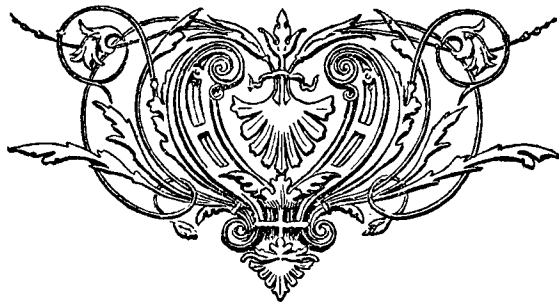
The report that was made at Meade's headquarters was substantially this: That the advance of the rebel army occupied Warrenton the night of October 12, that Ewell's Corps bivouacked on the road from Warrenton to Sulphur Springs, and that Hill's Corps extended from Waterloo to Amissville. This information was of great value to General Meade, for although on the evening of the twelfth he knew of the forward movement of the rebel army, yet the direction and limits of the movement were not known to him definitely until the result of our reconnaissance was reported.

There were some personal experiences on this reconnaissance that are worthy of mention. A private of Company A was overpowered by sleep while the regiment halted near Warrenton, and did not awake when it resumed its march. He was awakened at daybreak by the rebel bugles, and not knowing he was in the midst of the enemy confidently mounted his horse and rode into Warrenton in search of his regiment. He found the town occupied by a picket of the enemy, but with great coolness he drew his overcoat about him to conceal his under garments and shuffled along on his Virginia-gated horse, unsuspected by the enemy. Passing beyond the town in the direction of New Baltimore, he avoided their videttes by making a detour and finally reached our lines in safety.

The wanderings of Lieutenant Harris and his escape from rebel capture should also be narrated. On our arrival at Little Washington, Colonel Smith sent Lieutenant Harris with a detail of twelve men to report to General Gregg the result of the reconnaissance thus far. He had reached Amissville by the same route we marched out in the morning without molestation, when he fell in with a small body of rebel cavalry that he

charged and dispersed. Proceeding on his way he soon after heard heavy firing in the direction of Sulphur Springs and learned that a fight was going on between General Gregg's division and Stuart's cavalry. Lieutenant Harris immediately retraced his steps with the intention of returning to the regiment and informing Colonel Smith of what was taking place in his rear, but before he had gone far he ran into the advance of Hill's Corps. Finding that escape was impossible while daylight lasted, he concealed his men in a clump of pines to await the passing of Hill's Infantry, and escape in the darkness of the night. But soon Hill's troops began going into camp all around him and two rebel soldiers, who straggled into the woods where he was concealed, were captured by Lieutenant Harris. Thinking it would be difficult to escape with his horses he broke up his saddles and sabers and at dark, with his prisoners, made his way through the rebel wagon train, and the next morning started on foot in the direction of Thoroughfare Gap. He was met by a small party of Mosby's men who charged down upon them, capturing two of his men, but by free use of their carbines they succeeded in driving them off. But he had not escaped his last danger. When he had nearly reached Thoroughfare Gap the squadrons of White's Cavalry came upon them and seeing that resistance was useless he surrendered. The rebels took them into the mountains, treated them very well, and in a few days sent them to Sulphur Springs, where they arrived at dusk and were consigned to an old brick house we had used as a hospital while encamped there in August. Their guard stood outside the door as they filed into the building, but Lieutenant Harris taking advantage of the darkness and his knowledge of the place, passed in the front door, through the hall and out of the back door, dropping several feet to the ground. He remained concealed in the tall weeds a short time, during which he heard the guard searching for him, and then crossed the river and made for our lines which he succeeded in reaching near Warrenton Junction, after an absence of two weeks.

In making this reconnaissance the regiment was in the saddle thirty hours, marching ninety miles, much of the time in close proximity to the flank of the rebel army, and at no time in very great peril, owing to the fact that we were perfectly acquainted with the country and had an open country to flee to in case of attack. Our touching the enemy's line at two points, and actually invading his cavalry camp, shows how easy it would be for a well-mounted, resolute body of cavalry to ascertain the position of the enemy's troops at night and make a break into their camps, doing much mischief.



TWENTY-TWO HOURS PRISONER OF WAR IN DIXIE.

By Brevet Major-General HENRY G. THOMAS.

ON the morning of August 1, 1864, a group of officers of high rank, half of them clad in Union blue and half in Confederate gray, stood in the center of a busy and terrible scene. On the left¹ towered the ragged, reddish yellow sides of the Petersburg crater. In front, and to the right and all about, lay the dead of the battle of July 30, the assault on the crater, two days before. There they lay, some in long rows, as if the terrible artillery fire had been a mighty scythe and had mown them down. In other places, on top of and across each other, in inextricable confusion, blue piled on gray and gray on blue, one could read the fierce hand-to-hand struggle so rare in modern war.

There is no distinction in color now. The Virginia summer sun has shone two days on these brave men and has turned them all a purplish black. Their faces are swollen and disfigured beyond all hope of recognition. So are their bodies, swelling the clothing almost to bursting, and in some instances the seams are gaping open. Some of the bodies have burst open, too, and the black, thick blood is oozing from the congested veins. An army of men, wearing the uniforms of both sides, are busy; some prolonging the deep wide trenches that serve as the last resting-place for both Union and Confederate; others rolling the bodies over and over on to the stretchers, carrying them to the ditch and sliding them in; others are busy rounding up the ditch with earth as fast as filled full of the dead, occasionally stopping to flatten down with their foot or shovel

¹In this article we will always look from the Union lines toward the Confederate lines.

an arm or leg that would otherwise protrude beyond its covering. They work rapidly, for the stench is intolerable and they are anxious to get through. Nature itself tells of the struggle. The trees are mutilated, branches shot off; trunks shattered and sometimes cut in two. The very earth is scarred and buffeted by the shells of the opposing forces. The *cheveaux de frise* in front of the Confederate lines is ragged and dilapidated; scarcely a slender spoke untouched by bullet. When these stakes or spokes one and one-half inches in diameter are struck almost without an exception, what wonder at the number of dead this great mausoleum of a ditch is receiving to-day!

One of those odd-shaped, hand-pulled wagons belonging to the Christian Commission, looking like a miniature steam fire engine, bearing stimulants and delicacies, including ice, arrives on the scene and looks in vain for wounded. All who were wounded too severely to crawl home when darkness enveloped the field are now dead. The wagon stops. The young clergyman in charge does not clearly see where he and his goods can be of use; but one of the Union officers beckons to him. You can see by the officer's gesture toward the vehicle and his bow to those in gray that he is suggesting some refreshment to the Confederates. They bow punctiliously in return and to such as will, an iced potation is passed and drunk with grave, silent courtesy. The two or three fledgling theologians with the wagon look mildly but wonderingly on as if this was hardly "smiting the Philistines hip and thigh."

This knot of officers, Union and Confederate, were the negotiators¹ on the flag of truce. The writer was a member of this board by General Burnside's order, with the ulterior purpose of recovering the body of his gallant young aide, Lieutenant Christopher Pennell, who fell by his side; the heroic Bross

¹These negotiators were sent out, equal in number and as near as possible in rank, from the headquarters of General Bushrod Johnson (Confederate) and from General Burnside. For the time, they represented the authority of the commander who sent them, and their duty was to see that the general rules and laws regulating flags of truce and the express stipulations of this flag were respected and consummated.

who, carefully attired in full uniform, was shot as he leaped from the works flag in hand, the first man of the brigade to obey the order to charge; the brave Rockwood, who eagerly mounted the parapet at the head of his regiment and met death with a cheer on his lips. But, as I noted before, faces and forms were mostly changed beyond recognition. Many of the dead were fairly honey-combed with bullets. At last the burial was finished and I was forced to abandon hope. At nine A. M., by previous detail, I was to go on duty as general of the trenches.¹

It was considerably beyond the hour, and it behooved me to report at corps headquarters as soon as possible and relieve the officer holding over on that duty; so, with a hasty good-day, I started to take a "bee line" from the vicinity of the crater to my own headquarters, where it was necessary for me to repair, to assume the proper uniform, mount my horse, call an orderly, etc. My nearest route thither took me diagonally to the left and rear. I pursued this course between the lines of the two armies until I reached the right of the picket line of our negro division. Passing to the rear of a few picket posts I came to a wooded hill that ran sharply down to a little stream or run, and I invite particular attention to the nature of the ground here, if one would learn how a man can pass in rear of his own picket line and yet be captured by the enemy. As I said, I had come to the steep, thickly wooded bank of a small brook, or run, as such a stream is generally called in that country. This was the right bank. The left bank opposite me was flat and low, and covered with a dense, scrubby new growth of underbrush about four feet high. Two or three hundred feet back toward our lines, the left bank rose just as the right one did where I encountered it, but opposite me it

¹ In the Ninth Corps, and, I think, in the Army of the Potomac generally, each brigade commander in rotation took charge for twenty-four hours, of all the command actually on guard in the trenches, and while on that duty was designated "General of the Trenches." The duty was somewhat analogous to that of "Officer of the Day" on an enlarged scale and the sash was worn over the shoulder as then prescribed for the "Officer of the Day."

was flat, low, and covered with underbrush, as I have described. Now, as my evil star would have it, our pickets on the left bank were posted some two or three hundred feet to the rear of their position on the right in order to take advantage of the first good rising ground for a lookout. This, with the elbow or bend which the stream here made, gave this low ground, comprised in the bend, to the Confederates. I noticed plenty of men in the little stream washing their clothes, but of this I thought nothing. Our eighty thousand men in the Army of the Potomac gave us a weekly wash-list of eighty thousand sets of underclothing, with every man his own laundress. We did not always get them done, yet the *pediculi* which inhabited the military drawers and shirt constantly encouraged the poor soldier to wash his clothes whenever he could, and although we called these little animals "gray-backs" (Confederates), yet they came on Union soldiers as well, and all available water not required for drinking or cooking was eagerly utilized for washing.

Why didn't I know they were rebs, do you ask? Well, we didn't brand the army man as we did the army mule, with U. S or C. S. as the case might be; and the naked Confederate had no distinguishing marks from his naked Union antagonist. So casting my eye along the stream for a chance to cross, I saw a tree which grew almost horizontally out of the steep bank. Walking out on its trunk until the dry land of the other bank was under my feet, then I swung myself off and plunged into the underbrush I have already described as growing thick and low on the left bank. I had hardly gone a rod, however, when a Confederate soldier rose out of the brush, not fifty yards away, and covered me with deliberate aim. Then, for the first time, I knew what the sensation was of having one's heart in his mouth. Thoughts come quick in trying moments, and patting my canteen and nodding my head I gave my adversary to understand I had brought some whisky to exchange for tobacco, a common traffic on the picket line. He nodded, apparently satisfied, and I was backing towards the

bank, as one naturally would, to await the relief of this soldier from his post, when a number of others, doubtless attracted by the sentry's movements, arose, each one, as is the wont of veterans, musket in hand. At that moment a Confederate captain, about a hundred yards in rear, jumped to his feet, and pointing to me cried "Halt," and to his command, "Cover that man." Instantly, I was covered with the muzzles of rifles as with a garment. I had presumed on wearing no insignia of rank when I assumed the character of a private soldier with the sentry. My trousers were of the reenforced pattern issued to cavalry, and my blouse a private's blouse, drawn the day before from the quartermaster's department, to replace one torn and defaced beyond repair in the action of the day before that. But my riding-boots, of expensive and handsome make, and my field-glass, were not the fittings of a private soldier. On account of a recent sunstroke I had donned a broad brimmed straw hat, such as was universally worn by the members of the Christian Commission among us, and I determined to try to pass for one. So raising my hat and mimicking the super-clerical air of our worthy Scotch pastor at home (an imitation which had won me applause as a lad), I said, "You would not make a prisoner of a non-combatant, here on an errand of mercy, would you? I am a member of the Christian Commission." "Christian Commission be d—d," growled one Confederate soldier. "Jist look at the mug on him!" shouted another, an Irishman. "Come here," demanded the officer, and amid still further derision of my clerical role, I obeyed and found myself a prisoner of war on General Mahone's picket line. My little ruse being so unsuccessful, I told the captain of my connection with the flag of truce, how I was simply hurrying back to fill a detail; claimed, and with good reason, that the truce extended the whole Ninth Corps line, and demanded my release. He, after much urging, sent his lieutenant to General Mahone with my statement. Word came back if there was nothing suspicious about me to release me. "By G—d," exclaimed the captain, after some moments' reflection, "There is something suspicious about him

and I'll send him in." Doubtless the desire to get credit for a capture so easily made had much to do with his decision. He then satisfied himself that I had no concealed weapons. I was searched here on the picket line only to this extent; then I was suffered to sit down. I suddenly remembered I had in my pocket-book, on yellow transfer paper, a plan of the crater and adjacent grounds. If discovered they might claim I was out as a spy, or had abused my position on the flag to make it. I felt in my pocket-book, while sitting on the ground, and thought I could distinguish it. When observation was pretty well withdrawn I managed to slip it into my mouth while taking out an unlighted cigar I had placed there for this purpose. Finally some one was good enough to offer me a match, and as I sat silently smoking and chewing, apparently at my cigar, I managed to chew up the paper.

I was sorry to notice a goodly number of U. S. A. shoes on the feet of these C. S. A. soldiers. Our supplies, better and more ample throughout than ever distributed before to an army, were to our disadvantage in this; that such a mass of *impedimenta*, of priceless value to our meagerly supplied foe, and difficult to move, frequently fell into their hands when we retreated. But when we were the pursuers, as a rule they had so little to move they could easily move what they had, and even when we got it, it wasn't much. So when they alluded to our army as their quartermaster and commissary, there was a spice of truth in the joke.

Orders had come, I know not why, how, or from whom, to conduct me directly to General Bushrod Johnson's headquarters, and an ambulance had arrived for the purpose. This ambulance, too, I am sorry to say, was a nice, almost new "Dougherty,"¹ and was marked U. S. The captain pointing to the U. S. remarked with a grin that he had done what he could to keep

¹ The "Dougherty wagon" was a more expensively made affair than an ambulance, and was for the use of officers, having seats like a hackney coach, which, however, spread into a bed like an ambulance. The ambulance proper, had seats along the sides like a horse car, capable also of being made into a bed.

me from feeling homesick. I strongly urged my captor to allow me to be blindfolded before starting; so that if superior authority decided that I was entitled to my release, my having seen their works would not operate as a bar. After very strenuous urging on my part, he consented, and I was blindfolded with my own pocket handkerchief. The captain, bound to make me feel as uncomfortable as possible, now said he would bid me good-by for good, as he hardly expected to see me again. In this he was right; we did not meet again. We drove, I should think, about half an hour, I, blindfolded, on the back seat, and my guard on the middle seat facing me.

Arrived at General Johnson's headquarters, he was busy and I was hungry, and a captain of his staff was ordered to see that my hunger was satisfied. This officer was a tall, slender Englishman, dressed as to his right eye with a single rimless glass and as to his body, with corduroy. Food apparently was not plentiful even at a general's headquarters, and the captain conducted me to a wretched restaurant, which he said, and doubtless truthfully, was the best the neighborhood afforded. There, the only thing to eat was an Irish stew. I called for a portion and it was set before me, namely, the tip end of the wing of a starved chicken, swimming in a soup plate of tepid water, thickened with flour. A dough ball, as small and as hard as a marble, was its only companion. Not a morsel of bread accompanied it, nor was there a suspicion of potato in this Irish stew. When I came to pay, the generous proprietor said ten dollars in Confederate money was the price, but if I had no Confederate money, five dollars in greenbacks would do. A number of men and boys followed me into the restaurant, not to eat stew, but to abuse the prisoner. The captain made no effort to stop this, but I remonstrated, alleging that the stew was about as much as one human being could be expected to endure at one time, and he reproved them into silence. They experienced some satisfaction, however, by glaring at me from under their broad-brimmed hats.

Walking back, the captain led the conversation so as to pick up information, perhaps believing that I would wax communicative under the genial influence of the repast. Not willing to answer discourteously, I endeavored to "carry the war into Africa," by myself becoming the questioner. I asked him what part of England he was from, and if he knew certain Englishmen in our army whose names I mentioned; and finally remarked we had many young Englishmen in our army. This last grieved the captain, and screwing his single glass still more firmly into his right eye, gazing fixedly at me through it, his mouth partly open, and the eyeglass side of his head in a condition of apparent paralysis, he finally rebuked me with "Aw—I did not suppose there were any Englishmen in your army." Shortly after my return to headquarters, I was summoned by General Johnson, subjected to a rigid questioning, permitted to tell my story and urge my claim for release. I here gave my full volunteer as well as my regular rank, viz. — Colonel 19th U. S. C. T., commanding First Brigade, Fourth Division, Ninth Army Corps. This I had not dared to do on the picket line.

In reply the general delivered a lengthy and lawyer-like opinion on the rights and limitations of belligerents on the picket line under flags of truce, laying more stress on the limitations than the rights. The conclusion he drew from his dissertation was, however, that I had come to stay. In furtherance of this opinion he told me he would send me before long to the Rock House Prison in Petersburg, about a mile distant. I urged him to allow me to prepare a statement of my case to be forwarded to General Lee, but he refused. The conference was, I saw by his manner, ended; I asked him if I should withdraw and he nodded approval.

Stepping out I found I was not to be guarded by a sentry and went to a quiet corner of the headquarters, and sat down in the open air. A pleasant, gentlemanly little fellow by the name of Rhett, a member, he told me, of the famous family of that name, came over, sat down beside me and chatted a while. It came out shortly that he had been very much pleased with my

long boots which either pulled up the whole length of the leg, or, by taking a fold in them, stood the height of the knee. He told me I would doubtless be sent to Salisbury and have to march, and a pair of infantry shoes would be much better for me; that if I desired he would now procure me such a pair in exchange for my boots. I told him I had not yet given up the expectation of being released, and that my number nine boots, with a leg for a two hundred pound man, would hardly be becoming to his dapper little figure. He laughed, measured them with his eye, and then remarked that he feared he might look a little too much like Puss in Boots with that pair on,—whistled a few bars,—got up and walked away.

Shortly after General Beauregard rode up accompanied by an officer, who was greeted as colonel. General Beauregard entered General Johnson's headquarters, the staff officer remaining outside. General Beauregard wore a new and very handsome uniform of superfine cloth, I should think of foreign make. His horse and horse equipments, moreover, were very fine. I stepped nearer the handsome and handsomely caparisoned animal in my admiration, and attracted the attention of this officer of Beauregard's staff. "Who is that?" said he, pointing me out to the others. "Oh, that's a nigger colonel we captured on the picket line," replied an officer with careless contempt. "Come here," said the colonel to me. I did not move. "You d——d blue-bellied Yankee,—come here!"—he shouted. "I am a prisoner here with whom you have nothing to do, and I appeal to the staff of General Johnson, under whose orders I am, for protection," I replied. He then came over to me and said in the same insulting manner, "Hand me your field-glass?" I replied, "I will not; it is mine." After some further altercation he opened the case and took the glass from it. My remonstrances and his angry abuse roused General Johnson, who came out and said, "What's the matter here?" Catching the word in advance I replied, "This officer and I are having a discussion as to the merits of my field-glass; we do not agree. I desire to refer it to higher authority.

General Johnson, will you please take possession of the glass?" and taking the case with its strap from my shoulder, I handed it to him. "I'll be responsible for the glass," said he, and stretching out his hand he received it from the now thoroughly angry colonel and reentered the headquarters.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, guarded by a green, gawky, raw recruit of a country boy, I started on foot for the Rock House Prison, in the city of Petersburg proper. Reaching an unfrequented spot my guard, assuming an authoritative manner, which sat ill upon him, cried, "Halt!" and then added, "My orders are to search you, sir." I read him a lesson on his lying impudence, and threatened to report him. He begged off, said I would be sure to be stripped of everything as soon as the provost guard got hold of me, and the poor soldiers outside thought they might as well make something too, etc. I finally compromised, on his allowing me to buy some paper, envelopes and a lead pencil with which I intended, if possible, to plead my case before General Lee. Here, again, I was charged the inevitable ten dollars in Confederate money or, if I hadn't it, five dollars in greenbacks would do. I asked the price of apples and was told I could have two for the same amount. I finally bought the coveted two apples for one dollar in Union money.

Arrived at Rock House Prison I found the condition of affairs unappetizing. In the upper part of the building were confined the drunk and disorderly privates picked up during the day by the provost guard. There was not a moment's cessation of their noisy, foul-mouthed and profane talking, shouting and howling. Now and then discordant snatches of song mingled with the rest of the din and assisted at the pandemonium. Worse than this; the evidences of the filthy condition of things up there, not unusual to men in a far-gone drunken condition offending both eye and nostril, oozed and trickled down into our room through the ill-made, loose and broken floor. Almost immediately after my incarceration, Mr. Ottawa Hare, a citizen of Petersburg, called at the prison and asked the lieutenant in

command to let me come home with him, on my parole, and when that was refused, under guard. This being also denied, he asked permission, in the kindness of his heart, to send me a demijohn of whisky. This, naturally enough, was also vetoed. After shaking hands with me, thanking me for what I had done for him and wishing me good luck, the kind old gentleman, apparently much disappointed, departed. Mr. Hare had a large stock farm in front of Petersburg, and when our armies advanced there our lines ran across a considerable part of his farm. It so happened that my brigade was posted just at that point, and a good deal of his valuable racing property, such as saddles, blankets, colts and fillies fell into our hands. Mr. Hare had a good record as a Union man until the state went out, and this led me to take such energetic measures in obeying the order to look up his property that he recovered the most of it ; and he showed both his gratitude and his independence by doing his best to make me comfortable, even when such action would injure him with his fellow citizens.

The next incident of my capture was less gratifying. Not long after Mr. Hare had left, the lieutenant in charge brought in two rough-looking men who recognized me as a deserter from a certain rebel regiment. In imagination I saw the hangman's noose already about my neck and, thoroughly aroused, both by the sense of danger and probable disgraceful death, I retorted with all the force there was in me. I asked them, among other things, if they believed such a cock-and-bull story as that the populous North, that did not yet miss a man from its streets, was utilizing privates, deserters from the enemy, for brigade commanders, would pass muster ; and I added they might be sure of one thing, namely, that a Confederate officer in one of our prisons, of the same rank as myself, would swing in atonement for any such outrage upon me. As I heard no more about it, I have since thought that this charge of desertion was made by the young officer out of pure wanton desire to torment. At the time, however, I believed that it was a method adopted to put an end to me because I commanded a

colored brigade; that their affairs were not sufficiently prosperous to warrant the fulfilment of their threat to execute all officers of colored troops falling into their hands; and for that reason they would satisfy their own people by hanging me, while the pretext would be plausible enough to bar retaliation from the North.

I now set myself vigorously at work with the paper and pencil I had bought, to write out a statement of my capture, point out the injustice of it and demand my release. I picked out an honest-looking fellow of the guard and told him if he would take my letter to the headquarters of General Lee and bring me back a receipt that it had been delivered, I would give him twenty dollars in greenbacks. He carried it honestly, as the sequel proved. Another member of the guard made conversation with me. He had served, he said, in the regulars (6th Infantry) before the war. Everything about him indicated regular service and he rather won my confidence. He expressed regret at it being his duty to guard a regular officer. I talked with him a good deal. He told me that our greenbacks were easily worth ten times as much as the Confederate money and that he could get fifteen hundred dollars Confederate money for my watch and chain. I had become very hungry, and he told me of one place where even a Union officer might have an honest meal by paying for it, and said he thought I could manage to get permission to go out under guard, and, if I did, he would volunteer to escort me and doubtless would be permitted to do so. I think his tour of duty ended about 5.30 P. M., and then he would have comparative freedom for twenty-four hours. On the reappearance of the lieutenant in command, I asked, and somewhat to my surprise, obtained the requisite permission. Such a thing would have been impossible in any well-regulated Northern military prison. But the Southern discipline, though in many respects as efficient as our own, was very different.

And now my brain, stimulated to abnormal activity by the events of the day, and particularly the probability of dying a

dog's death at the hands of the hangman on account of commanding colored troops, began to teem with hundreds of wild and impracticable plans of escape. I opened the subject somewhat gingerly to the ex-regular soldier mentioned above — he, who was to be my guard on my outing — and he listened. On sounding him I felt he would be able to listen very attentively for a consideration. He finally told me of a deep ravine with a tiny creek running along the bottom, which began well this side of their lines, ran through them and entered the river below. This, he thought, I could enter after dark, and working carefully along the bottom reach the river, and then float down with the current until within our own lines. About six P M., we sallied forth. He allowed me to enter a negro cabin to bathe my feet, which I had blistered with too much walking in my riding-boots. The negro, a bulky fellow as large as myself, agreed if I wanted them and could get to him after dark, to let me have his coat, trousers, hat and shoes and a long, sharp knife. My guard had remained outside and I could talk freely with the negro. The plan between my guard and myself was, that he was to take me near enough to the ravine by daylight to point it out. Then, just before tattoo, when my outing ceased, he would let me escape as near the neighborhood of it as practicable ; would fire his musket and commence pursuit in the wrong direction. He agreed to draw his load and let me put a blank cartridge into the bore with my own hand, and finally he said he believed he would simply go along with me, throw away his musket, reach our lines with me and try to get back to his old regular regiment.

I had already begun to distrust him and it entered my mind as a possibility that should my guard attempt to play me false at the last moment, I might be able with this knife to despatch him and, disguised in the negro clothes, make my way to the ravine and escape after all. This was not a very promising plan but at the time I fully expected "to be hanged by the neck until dead," if I remained a prisoner ; and the wildest plan, as long as there was

a shadow of hope about it, seemed worth trying in default of a better. The hostelry where I was to sup was more than a mile from the prison. As I walked along, the open air and exercise brought me more and more into a natural frame of mind. I began to lay proper stress on the justice of my cause. I saw more clearly the superserviceable willingness of my guard. I even doubted the existence of the convenient ravine adjusted by nature for my especial escape, and was in grave doubt whether it might not be better to give up my plans altogether and run the risk of my guard's denouncing me for having tried to tamper with him. I concluded, however, to hold on to watch and money until after supper, though I saw this made him very sulky ; and also to get supper the first thing, as I was faint and suffering from want of food and thought a square meal might help mind as well as body.

And now we reached the place ; a large white house in the outskirts. There were a number of Confederate officers about the front stoop ; one of them decidedly the worse for liquor. Avoiding them, at my request, we made a little circuit around to the back door and I was shown into a retired room where my presence would be unknown and the prejudices of my landlady's regular customers undisturbed. My guard told me the truth about the supper. I had an ample and satisfying repast, and I had my room to myself, the guard remaining outside. And now an event occurred which solved all my doubts. As I was about finishing, a very beautiful, tall and stately girl entered. Shutting the door as she came in she stepped briskly up behind me, and bending to my ear, said in a low tone, "When you finish your supper, come up-stairs. I will be waiting there for you. See that you do it ; your life depends upon it." Then, with a warning look, she swiftly disappeared by the other door. Supper finished, I mounted the stairs and entered the room the young lady stood beckoning me into. She hastily closed the door and said in a low tone, "Don't speak ; listen. That fellow is betraying you and I don't believe you are the first one. I heard the whole story from his lips under this window to a

detective of the provost marshal general," and looking cautiously out, she added, "They're there now, together." Dropping her voice almost to a whisper, she continued, "I have a plan. When you go, go out the front door ; you came in the side. Go to the left and away from the lines ; that is, toward your prison. Look about you as if for your guard and saunter on. He will probably call you, or he will in some way direct you toward the lines as you agreed. You reply, 'That's not the way to the prison. I'm very tired and want to go back now.' Your chance is that he is known to be a bad fellow ; has helped other prisoners to their destruction and any statement of his will require corroboration. You have given up nothing to him yet, have you?" "No ;" said I. "You doubt me, I see," she added. "That is natural enough but you had better not, and you do not remember me, but I enjoyed your hospitality at Camp Birney in Baltimore, last winter. Do you remember giving up your headquarters in the tower, to some of your officers who brought up ladies to see a review of your command and giving us a lunch afterward ? I was one of the Union ladies, and I couldn't see you put in irons, without trying to save you. Your destruction will not win our cause. Now go ; (it won't do for me to have you longer here) and obey me as you value your life."

As I passed down-stairs my instinct told me to trust the girl, and I did as she bade. Up came my guard on the run. "Hist ! Where are you going?" said he in a whisper. "Oh, I'm all tired out,— I can scarcely stand ; this is the way back, isn't it ? I wish I was there, even in that hole," I replied in a loud tone. "But," said he, "you'd better hand over that watch and chain now, hadn't you?" "Well," said I, "I've thought it all over and I believe it will be better for me to state the case to the highest officer I can, and see if I cannot be allowed to sell it under his authority. I think perhaps I may be able to transact the matter openly and above board and get the money doled out to me. I'm afraid to have so much about me as a prisoner." "But what about getting off?" said he.

"Oh ; I don't think much of your plan for that," I replied. "I believe I am going to be released, anyhow." It was too dark to see the astonishment on his face and he had no time to express it in words for, as I was speaking, a man in citizen's clothes stepped rapidly up, said to the guard, "You may fall to the rear ;" and taking me by the arm said, "You will walk with me." I stopped still a moment and said, "What is this ? I came out under military guard. By what right do you, a citizen, interfere ? Is this some scheme to trap or injure me ?" "Not at all," said he ; "I am the chief detective of the army here. I wish to put a few questions to you separate from your guard. Why did you give him your watch ?" "I haven't yet," said I. "He told me he could raise \$1,500 on it, and I thought of letting him have it ; also my money for which he said he could get me ten dollars for one in Confederate money ; but, the more I saw of him the less I trusted him, and he seemed so interested to get it that at last I refused, pointblank." He put a number of other questions to me, looked at my watch and pocket-book, said the watch and chain were worth nearly double the sum the guard named. He satisfied himself also, I fancy, that whatever my desire for either liberty or ready cash, that the guard was taking the initiative, and trying by specious lies and suggestions of help, to steal all I had.

Arrived at the prison, I was stripped and searched and everything, even a little two-bladed penknife, taken from me. But I also had the satisfaction of hearing the order given to put my sentry in irons. I sat down on the filthy floor, putting my blouse under me. Most of my fellow prisoners were sleeping. Worn out as I was, I could not sleep. The events of the day seemed like a dream. I could not realize that this poor, dirty prisoner was myself, or that I was really a live existence, and yet, with this instinct of unreality, home, wife, baby, parents and friends, all, seemed a hundred times more real than ever when in full possession. I recalled my service in Louisiana the year before when I, twenty-five years old, to whom sickness was unknown, perfect in constitution and health,

with the comforts of a colonel, had succumbed to the extreme southern climate as one would to poison. How, then, could I hope to withstand the climate, half starved and a prisoner? But would I ever have the chance for my life? Was I not about to be tried, convicted and hanged as a deserter from a rebel regiment? Would I have nerve enough to face the inevitable like a man? Or would the life I was living so wear me out that I would in my closing scene act more like a baby than a soldier? If I did, would not the story of my not facing death manfully get North to my relatives, and would not even those who mourned me be ashamed of me? These reflections forced themselves on me until I became, as our English cousins say, quite "low in my mind," when an officer entered the prison and began to call the roll for immediate departure for Salisbury. I listened with eagerness, hoping my name would be called when the T's were reached; as, in that case, I was neither to be murdered immediately nor to go to Andersonville.

At this moment a man, not in uniform, entered and asked in a contemptuous tone, "Where's that colonel of niggers?" I was pointed out and, with a "You're wanted," he took me by the arm and marched me out of the room and to the office of Major D. B. Bridgford, Lee's provost marshal-general. Major Bridgford, who resembled the late General McLellan, looked at me for some little time and said, "Your case has been disposed of." I steadied myself as best I could to hear bad news with that Indian-like unruffled exterior I had admired often in Confederate prisoners. He then added, "You are to be released and sent across our lines." This was too much and I danced all over the room. Major Bridgford remarked, "I thought that would fetch you. Good news to a prisoner generally does." He then laid before me everything which had been taken from me a few hours before; required me to verify the contents of my pocket-book and state whether I had now received back everything. I begged the major (we were absolutely alone), to accept my watch and chain. This he positively declined to do, saying laughingly, "You are too exuberant." I then urged my

money upon him, saying that should he ever be a prisoner, or the war terminate in our favor, it would be of the greatest value to him. He then said somewhat sharply, "My government pays me for all my service, sir." Of course I forbore. Major Bridgford told me I would not be sent across the lines until about two A. M., when the pickets were most likely to be quiet. This gave me plenty of time to think of everything and the episode of the field-glass came vividly before me. Obtaining from Major Bridgford permission to write to General Bushrod Johnson, also the materials, I wrote as follows :—

"General Johnson :—

"DEAR SIR :— It still gives me great pleasure to have been able to leave so excellent a field-glass as mine in the hands of a general so distinguished as yourself. But I have been trained by my father, a banker and careful man of business, never under any circumstances to lose a receipt. You would confer a favor on me, therefore, by taking from the bottom of the case the importer's bill and forwarding it to me here, at the provost marshal's office, where I shall remain a few hours, when I am, according to the commanding general's interpretation of the '*jus belli* on the picket line,' to be released and sent across to our lines.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"H. G. Thomas,

"Captain 11th Infantry, U. S. Army,

"and Colonel 19th U. S. C. T."

In due time I was marched over the weary distance which intervened between Rock House Prison and the Confederate outer line. There I waited in the hut of the captain commanding their pickets at that point. He was good natured and glad of some one to help him perform his duty of keeping awake, and we chatted pleasantly. While chatting, a mounted orderly rode up, inquired for me, handed me my field-glass with a letter, and also a receipt to sign for it. The letter read thus :—

"Colonel Thomas :—

"SIR :— I send you by mounted orderly your field-glass, for which you will recollect I said I would be responsible. You will return me

a receipt. As you remark in your letter, it is an excellent one. This being the case, let me advise you to make more frequent use of it in future; thus avoiding unpleasant accidents on the picket line.

“Very respectfully, etc.,

“Bushrod Johnson,

“Lieutenant-General C. S. A.”

In the correspondence, the joke is unmistakably on the writer; but then the repossession of the glass must count for something. The captain explained to me that the trouble would be so to inform my own side that they would not fire on me; that one shot would start a fusillade from their side. Advancing to one of his little picket holes with me, he succeeded in opening communication with ours, and explained he wanted to send in a prisoner who had been released. Some little time was spent notifying the pickets of both sides, along the lines to right and left, not to fire, and I passed across, from bondage into liberty.

I was then taken under guard to the headquarters of Colonel Tilden, 16th Maine, who commanded a brigade in that neighborhood. Thence I was sent to my own headquarters, arriving there at early dawn. Exhausted as I was, I could not sleep. A fever burned in my veins and parched my throat. The doctor took me in hand; but still my condition was such that he vetoed the peremptory orders from corps headquarters for me to repair there at once, to tell the story of my trip; writing back that if disturbed until I had slept as long as nature demanded, the consequences would probably be serious; nor did he allow me to leave my bed until next day.

The news of this unusual capture, and unprecedented return to liberty, all in twenty-two hours, flew on the swift wings of rumor through the army and was the one topic and wonder for its brief day. Nobody seemed willing to believe the bare plain truth. I received hundreds of hints that I had not told my whole story and hundreds of efforts were made to draw me out. Many went so far as to supply the missing link out of their own heads; but each one supplied a different link.

The most amusing invention accounting for my trip was from one of my colored headquarters guard. One morning, lying in my tent, while the old guard were policing the premises, I heard this man say to another. "I dun foun' out what I 'spected from de fust 'bout de ole colonel. Yes, sah ; I dun foun' out. He de highest mason in de worl', and when he got froo gosheatin' on dat flag er truce, he made dem rebs de gran' sign ; de gran'est sign ob all ; an dey couldn't resist it and had ter let him froo ; an' he staid roun' dere till he got tired and den he give de same sign an' marched straight back ag'in. Yes, sah ; I s'picioned dat from de fust ; an' I 'vestigated it and dats de livin' fac' "

After the war was over I met Major Bridgford, a capital fellow in time of peace, as well as a good soldier in war. He cleared up several things about my capture. One was that my communication to General Lee was referred to him with the endorsement to look it up and if he found everything exactly as I had stated, to release me ; that he sat up until after midnight to do it ; so that this promptness without regard to hours was all that at last stood between me and Salisbury Prison. Another was that my letter to General Johnson about my field-glass had been endorsed by him to be returned to me by order of General Lee ; this being in accordance with Lee's general instructions in all such cases. This does not in any way suggest that General Johnson would not have done it without.

And the beautiful girl that interested herself in my behalf ? Have I ever seen her since ? I'll say no more about her lest I give some clue to my good angel. This much, however, dear reader, she was beautiful in face and form and a golden blonde, just the color the old masters loved to paint their angels, and just such as I have often painted them, in fancy, since.

AT GETTYSBURG IN 1863 AND 1888.

By Lieutenant and Adjutant CHARLES W ROBERTS.

THE 17th Maine Regiment, with which it was my privilege to be connected during the year 1863, was attached to the Third Brigade, First Division of the Third Army Corps, and on the first of July, the day that the battle of Gettysburg began, it was on the march between Taneytown and Emmettsburg, Md., arriving at the latter place, a small village about nine miles south of Gettysburg, late in the afternoon. The brigade with a section of artillery remained at Emmettsburg, guarding one of the mountain passes at that point, until about three o'clock on the following morning, when orders were received to proceed with all possible despatch to Gettysburg; and just before daylight the brigade moved out upon the Emmettsburg road, but, for reasons unknown to us at the time, our progress was slow and halts were frequent and tedious.

As we neared our destination we learned from the farmers living along the roadside the particulars of the battle of the previous day between the advance corps of the Union army (First and Eleventh) under General Reynolds, and the main body of the enemy, and we heard with deep sorrow the sad news of the death of the noble commander of the First Corps. As we approached the vicinity of Gettysburg, we became aware of the proximity of the enemy by the occasional whistling of bullets over our heads from his skirmishers (located in the woods at our left) who were then feeling the Union lines. Proceeding a little further along on the Emmettsburg road to a point near the famous peach orchard, we turned off to the right, and after marching something over half a mile through fields and woods we came to a rough and rocky pasture, where we finally halted and remained several hours.

While resting here, the first opportunity of the day to make coffee was improved, and this constituted the entire meal of many of the men, as our early and hasty departure from Emmettsburg prevented the distribution of rations of which we were greatly in need. I remember sitting upon a large rock with my messmates, Dr. Nahum A. Hersom, then the surgeon, and Dr. William Wescott, assistant surgeon of the regiment, and taking what proved to be my last meal with my comrades in the field.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the regiment was ordered forward a short distance and took position in line of battle on a woody knoll a few hundred yards to the left of the peach orchard, facing in the direction of the Emmettsburg road. Noticing a clearing near the right of our line, I approached it with the commanding officer of the regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles B. Merrill, and found that it afforded an excellent view of the peach orchard and its surroundings. Up to this hour, about half-past three o'clock, there had been no firing of any consequence during the day in that vicinity; but while looking across the country I observed the enemy's skirmishers advancing through the fields beyond the Emmettsburg road, and almost at the same instant the Union skirmishers in the peach orchard, consisting in part of the 3d Maine Regiment, moved out to meet them. A brisk fire was at once opened, the shots of the enemy coming so uncomfortably near us that we deemed it prudent to seek the shelter of the woods where the regiment was lying awaiting orders. We did not have long to wait, however, for the movement of the skirmishers was immediately followed by the advance of the enemy's main lines, consisting of General Longstreet's corps, and the rattle of musketry began upon our right.

Noticing an unoccupied wheat-field to our left, forming a wide gap between the flank of our brigade and the right of Ward's brigade (of our division), our brigade commander, Colonel R. DeTrobian, ordered the 17th Maine to occupy it. The regiment immediately moved by the left flank double-quick through

the woods in our front, diagonally across the wheat-field to a stone wall separating it from thick woods beyond, which we found occupied by the enemy, who opened upon us a heavy musketry fire as we neared the wall ; but upon reaching it we were well protected and had no difficulty in holding our position against his repeated assaults. The movement of the 17th Maine into the wheat-field was soon followed by a similar one on the part of a Pennsylvania regiment, the 110th, if I remember correctly, that was directed to connect with our right, necessitating its advance through a ravine about fifty yards from our flank under a severe fire from the enemy in the woods. Lacking the friendly shelter of the stone wall which barely extended to the right of our line, that regiment was unable to withstand the terrific fire poured in upon it and soon retired with the loss of many of its members.

Taking advantage of the repulse of the 110th, the enemy advanced into the ravine evidently with the intention of flanking the 17th Maine. As soon as his object was discovered, Colonel Merrill ordered a portion of our right wing to swing back at right angles with the stone wall in front, and it came within the line of my duty to communicate that order to the captains of the several companies, as the rattle of musketry and roar of artillery from a battery near us prevented the voice of our commander being heard along the line. The movement was promptly executed in the face of a severe fire from the enemy in front and upon our flank, but with heavy loss to the regiment, two of the captains and one of the lieutenants receiving mortal wounds and many of the enlisted men falling under the shower of bullets.

The attempt of the enemy, however, was frustrated for the time, and the regiment held its position until the ammunition gave out, when it retired across the wheat-field over a ridge in the rear into a narrow road by the side of a belt of woods where it halted, reformed and was resupplied with ammunition.

About this time General D. B. Birney, our gallant division commander, with several of his staff, rode along the line and,

observing the enemy advancing toward a Federal battery near our left in the vicinity of the Devil's Den, turned to the 17th Maine and directed it to move forward, accompanying it in person into the wheat-field to the crest of the ridge over which we had passed but a few moments before. Here we were ordered to halt in the open field on what we supposed to be the prolongation of a new line of battle then being formed; but the nature of the ground prevented our knowing whether or not we were supported by other troops upon our flanks. While the regiment occupied this exposed position, in full view of the enemy that upon our advance had fallen back to the shelter of the woods, our ranks being rapidly thinned out by his musketry fire, I was struck in the right leg above the knee by a bullet with such force as to throw me upon my face. Colonel Merrill, who was standing near me, immediately cut one of the straps from his sword belt and bound it tightly around my limb to stop the flow of blood, and ordered four of the men near at hand to take me to the rear in a rubber blanket, as the stretchers of the ambulance corps were all in use at that moment. From this time my personal knowledge of the movements of the regiment ceased, but I afterwards learned that it remained on the wheat-field until relieved about dark by other troops, having lost about one hundred and twenty killed and wounded during the afternoon, and on the following day some twelve or fifteen more while supporting batteries engaged in the repulse of Pickett's charge.

In being carried to the rear I passed through two lines of battle that were apparently forming for the relief of the Third Corps, which had been under fire without support since early in the afternoon. I was conveyed to what was at that time presumed to be a safe distance from the front where I met the assistant surgeon of the regiment, who examined my wound and gave it such attention as the circumstances would permit. Later in the afternoon, when our forces were compelled to abandon the advanced position taken at the opening of the battle, the shells of the enemy's artillery began dropping among the wounded in my vicinity, and I, with others, was removed

farther back into the woods to a place of safety where I found the division hospital established. During the evening an attendant, sent to me from the regiment, erected the fly of my wall tent which afforded me shelter during my stay in the field hospital, and where, lying by my side, Captain Almon L. Fogg of the 17th Maine, who received a mortal wound in the afternoon, died during the night.

On the afternoon of the following day, July 3, my wound was carefully examined by our regimental surgeon, Doctor Hersom, and upon his recommendation my limb was amputated by Surgeon Hildreth of the 4th Maine, under the personal supervision of Doctor Hersom. I remained in the field hospital, receiving every possible attention from the surgeons and comrades on duty, until July 6, when, through the efforts of Sergeant Frank Berry of our division ambulance corps, I secured accommodations in a private house in the town of Gettysburg. The nature of my wound rendered it imprudent to move me in an ambulance over the rough fields and roads in that vicinity, and I was carried upon a stretcher the entire distance of three miles. A number of the hospital attendants voluntarily undertook the task, but fortunately, after proceeding a short distance, we came to the headquarters of Major-General Slocum, commanding the Twelfth Corps, where I obtained a detail of men from his provost guard then consisting of a battalion of the 10th Maine Infantry, a regiment in which I served during the first year of the war.

Upon reaching Gettysburg, I was taken to the house of Mr. Henry Garlach, located on South Baltimore Street, the main thoroughfare leading out to the scene of the second and third days' battle and connecting with the Emmettsburg road. The house was an old-fashioned, two-story brick building, close to the sidewalk ; and the front hall being very narrow and small I was admitted through a window and a comfortable bed made for me in the parlor near the windows overlooking the street.

The family in the house consisted of Mr. Garlach, a man about forty-five years of age, of German descent, a cabinet-maker by trade, also engaged in the manufacture of coffins and

caskets, (and, as can be readily imagined, having at that time all the business that he could attend to), his wife, a few years younger than himself, two daughters, one about my own age and the other quite small, and two sons, one of the latter an infant but a few months old. During the occupancy of the town by the enemy, July 2 and 3, the father fled to the woods for fear of being impressed into service, while the mother and children remained in the cellar of the house for safety from exploding shells and stray bullets.

I remained at the home of Mr. Garlach between four and five weeks, receiving every care and attention from the several members of the family, and no mother could have been more thoughtful and tender than was my good hostess, Mrs. Garlach. My every want seemed to be anticipated, and what their limited means and my own failed to obtain, the agents of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, that were early in the field and visited me daily, were always ready and willing to provide. Among them was Mrs. C. A. L. Sampson of Bath, so well and familiarly known as one of the most efficient army nurses, and whose many acts of kindness will long be remembered by the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac, and especially those from the state of Maine.

My wound was carefully looked after by the surgeons on duty where I was located and caused me but little pain, and with the tender care bestowed upon me by my attendant, Mr. Thomas M. Dennett of the 17th Maine, who was permitted to remain with me at Gettysburg, and my honored father, who came to me as soon as news reached him of the battle, as well as the untiring efforts of all the members of the household to leave nothing undone that could add to my comfort, served to make my stay there, aside from physical weakness, pleasant and agreeable; and it was with reluctance that on the sixth of August, I left their hospitable roof for my home in this city, where I arrived in safety about a week later.

For a time after reaching home I continued a correspondence with my friends at Gettysburg, but it finally ceased although

they were not forgotten ; and when, at the annual reunion of the survivors of the 17th Maine it was decided to make an excursion to Gettysburg during the month of October, 1888, my thoughts naturally turned to those who had befriended me in 1863, and a letter of inquiry, through a Grand Army comrade residing there, brought me the pleasing intelligence that the family of Mr. Garlach was still living in the old homestead, and I received soon after a letter from my old nurse, Mrs. Garlach herself, expressing great pleasure upon hearing that I still remembered them and soon contemplated a visit to Gettysburg. She informed me that her husband had died about one year before, but that the other members of the family were living in the town.

Upon arrival in Gettysburg with the 17th Maine excursion party on the afternoon of October 9, 1888, I lost no time in finding the home of my old friends, where I met with a warm reception. The lady of the house, now sixty-seven years of age, is still smart and active, and although the frosts of twenty-five winters have silvered her locks somewhat since I last saw her, I found the same kind heart and motherly welcome that greeted me, when weak and helpless I was borne to her house from the battlefield on that sultry July morning in 1863.

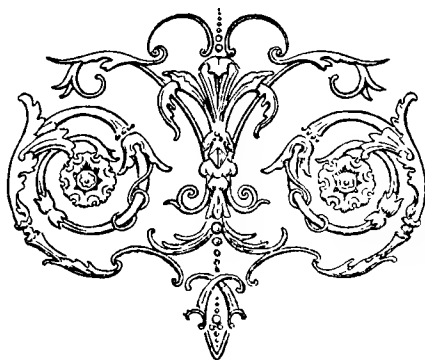
The younger members of the family had changed more than the mother. One of the daughters, who at the time of the battle was but eighteen years of age, is now the wife of a Union soldier who lost an arm at Spottsylvania, a lawyer by profession and a leading and influential man in Gettysburg, and they have a pleasant home of their own with an interesting family growing up around them. Another daughter, a small child when I first saw her, still remains at home and was a member of the choir that furnished beautiful music at the dedication of our regimental monument in the wheat-field on the following day. Of the sons, one is married and engaged in business in the town, and the other, the baby, who in his mother's arms passed the three anxious days of the battle in the cellar of their house, is now a fine-looking young man twenty-six years of age.

The room that I occupied after the battle had not materially changed in its general appearance except in the furnishings, and as I entered it to greet my old friends, it brought back to my mind the hours when I lay there watching through the window by my bedside the passing to and fro of anxious ones who were arriving by every train from the North, in search of wounded and perhaps dead or dying brothers, sons and friends scattered through the houses, hospitals and fields in and around Gettysburg. It recalled the pale face of a young captain of my own regiment lying in a house directly opposite with his arm amputated near the shoulder, from the effects of which he died soon after reaching home, and the ragged and forlorn appearance, as they passed my window, of thousands of Confederate prisoners captured during the several days of the battle. It also revived pleasant recollections of numerous visitors who daily dropped in upon me, speaking encouraging words and carrying messages to anxious friends at home. I was also reminded of the pleasant summer evenings when, after the noise and confusion of the day, the younger members of the family and their neighboring friends would assemble around me and enliven the twilight hours with music and social conversation. It also recalled the watchful care of faithful comrades and the cheerful countenances of kind friends in whose home I was made so comfortable; and as I looked about me it was indeed a rare privilege to meet again under that roof, and in that room, after an interval of twenty-five years, so many of those to whom I felt that I owed a debt of gratitude.

On the following day I visited the wheat-field, where the 17th Maine monument was dedicated with appropriate ceremony, and glancing around I could readily trace the different positions occupied by the regiment up to the time that I received my wound. The stone wall where we first met and repulsed the enemy, the ravine to our right where the Pennsylvanians were so terribly cut up, and the woods in our front and on our flank that sheltered the enemy, all had a familiar look, and the wheat-field itself, aside from the absence of the wheat,

has undergone but little change except by roads and avenues recently cut through it by the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, to obtain access to the numerous monuments that have been and are yet to be erected by the several states that were represented by organizations in the battle.

After making a tour of the entire field, following the lines of battle occupied by our troops on each of the three days that they were engaged, now so clearly defined by the various monuments and tablets located at nearly all of the prominent points of interest, and bidding good-by to my old friends in Gettysburg with the promise that, if living, it should not be twenty-five years before I would come again, I left there for a brief visit to Washington and other cities, arriving in Portland on the twentieth of October, having enjoyed a pleasant visit to the historic battlefield of Gettysburg, and renewed friendships formed under very peculiar circumstances.



THE BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY, AUGUST 5, 1864.

By Commander OLIVER A. BATCHELLER, U. S. N.

THE northern shores of the Gulf of Mexico are deeply indented by two arms of the sea, the westernmost one of which is known as Mobile Bay. This bay extends inland about thirty-five miles and has a width of from seven to fifteen miles. Its shores are low and generally well wooded, but as they recede from the waters of the bay they rise in gentle swells. Its waters are generally shallow and only in a small space, known as the lower bay, are they deep enough to float sea-going vessels of considerable size.

Here on August 5, 1864, was fought one of the most brilliant naval battles of the war and to a brief description of it I invite your attention.

The land defenses of the place at that time consisted of three forts — Morgan, Gaines and Powell. Fort Morgan, the most important of the three, was admirably located on the extreme western point of a long, low, narrow neck of land which bounds the main ship channel on the east. It was a powerful masonry fort, mounting eighty-six guns of various calibers, but mostly ten-inch Columbiads and rifled thirty-two pounders. It had been strengthened in every possible way, and new guns had been mounted in its water batteries. Its garrison amounted to six hundred and forty officers and men.

Opposite Fort Morgan, on the extreme eastern point of Dauphin Island, about three miles distant, was Fort Gaines. This was also a masonry fort mounting thirty guns, with platforms for ten more, which, however, at the time of the attack had not been mounted. Its garrison was eight hundred and sixty-four officers and men.

North of Fort Gaines, and about six miles from it, guarding Grant's Pass, a narrow cut leading from the bay into Missis-

sippi Sound, was Fort Powell. This was a small redoubt not yet completed, but mounting four heavy guns. Its garrison at the time was stated by the Confederates to have been one hundred and forty officers and men.

Between Forts Morgan and Gaines were small islands and shoals with shallow channels between them, the main ship channel being, as before stated, directly under the guns of Fort Morgan. Across these shallow channels obstructions had been placed in the form of rows of piling, which extended to deep water in the main ship channel. From this piling rows of torpedoes had been planted, extending nearly across the ship channel, their eastern limit being marked by a large buoy. The channel between this buoy and Fort Morgan was left open for blockade runners, and being but a few hundred yards wide, forced every vessel using it close under the fort.

Inside these defenses lay the iron-clad ram "Tennessee," on which more reliance was placed by the Confederates than on all their other defenses combined. This formidable vessel was two hundred and nine feet long, forty-eight feet wide, with an iron spur projecting beyond her stem at a depth of two feet below the water line, which rendered her, in public estimation, the most powerful ram of her time. Her bow and stern rose but little above the water line, but in the middle of her length, and occupying about one-half of it, was a casemate built of heavy timbers. The sides of this structure sloped inward at an angle and were covered with iron plates from five inches to six inches in thickness, which were believed to be impenetrable to shot.

Inside this casemate were six Brooks rifles, two in each broadside and one each at the bow and stern. These latter were mounted on pivots so arranged that they could be fired either directly ahead or astern on the line of the keel and on either broadside, thus giving her when needed four guns in a broadside. Ordinarily, however, her guns were fought, two in each broadside and one ahead and one astern. The former threw elongated projectiles weighing ninety-five pounds and

the latter similar projectiles weighing one hundred and ten pounds.

Her ports, of which she had ten, were fitted with heavy iron shutters so pivoted and fitted with spur wheels and ratchets worked from the inside that they could be opened or closed at pleasure, thus protecting the gun crews while loading. This arrangement proved to be unsatisfactory in action, as in one case at least a shutter became jammed by a shot striking when partly opened, and could not afterwards be moved, thus disabling its gun. But the vital defect in the vessel was in her steering gear which was much exposed, and was twice shot away during the action.

This vessel (also the Confederate fleet) was commanded by the admiral of the Confederate navy, Buchanan, and was manned by a picked crew.

As but little is known concerning this vessel and the difficulties that were met and overcome in building her, a brief account of her may be interesting.

She was built at Selma, Ala., in the winter of 1863-64. As soon as she was launched she was towed to Mobile to receive her machinery, armor and guns. It is said that the ore for the metal of her guns and armor was taken from the mines at the same time that the timber for her hull was cut in the forests.

About four months were taken in equipping her, and her draft of water was about thirteen feet. On her trial trip her speed was set down at eight knots, but this was afterwards reduced to about six from increased draft with coal and stores on board.

Having completed her, the problem remained of taking her over Dog River bar, on which there was about eight feet of water. To accomplish this, she was lightened as much as possible, and camels, shaped to fit her bottom, made. These were sunk by filling with water and securely lashed to her bottom with heavy chains passing under her keel; after which, the water being pumped out, they would rise by their buoyancy and if the lashings held, lift the vessel with them. The camels

were just completed when they were accidentally destroyed by fire and fresh timber had to be cut and new ones made.

This was done, and after great labor the ship was floated and dragged through the mud across the bar so that those on the blockade had in May, 1864, the doubtful pleasure of seeing her steam saucily down the bay.

Near the "Tennessee" lay the "Morgan," "Gaines," and "Selma," three wooden gun-boats. These were small vessels, but owing to their being used only in the smooth waters of the bay, they carried exceptionally heavy batteries for their size — much heavier than those carried by crafts of corresponding size in the blockading fleet. As in the case of the "Tennessee," these vessels were each commanded by officers who had received their training in the Union Navy.

To run past these forts and obstructions, and to capture or destroy these vessels, was the problem set before Admiral Farragut on August 5, 1864. As will be seen presently, he did not intend to attempt the capture of the forts at this time, feeling sure that once having obtained control of the bay, he could, with the assistance of a small land force, reduce them at his leisure. Meanwhile the main object of the government, the closing of Mobile to the outside world, would be accomplished by simply holding the bay.

A blockade of more or less efficiency had been maintained off Mobile since May, 1861, but it was not until the strongholds on the Mississippi had been reduced and the river opened, that enough vessels could be spared to maintain a really effective blockade. Even after most of his vessels had been assembled off the bar, Farragut was not able entirely to prevent small swift vessels from evading the blockade.

In January, 1864, Farragut, in person, made a reconnaissance, crossing the bar and approaching within easy gun shot of the fort. In his report he said: "I am satisfied that if I had one ironclad, I could at this time destroy all their forces in the bay, and reduce the forts at my leisure with the cooperation of our land forces, say five thousand men." "Without an ironclad

we should not be able to fight the enemy's vessels of that class with much prospect of success." And further on he says: "Wooden vessels can do nothing with them except at close quarters." We shall see presently what he meant by "close quarters."

At this time it was believed that the "Tennessee" was completed and ready for action, and that she was only held back out of sight for the purpose of drawing our vessels over the bar into her power. As we have seen, she was still unfinished. Had this been known, it is safe to say that the admiral would not have asked for even one ironclad, but would have made the attack as soon as his preparations were completed, and the world would have lost the spectacle of one of the prettiest naval fights in its history.

But an ironclad was considered necessary to ensure success; so the long tedious wait through the spring and summer had to be endured. How long and how tedious it was can only be understood by those who endured it.

Anchored in a semicircle off the bar the heavier vessels of the fleet lay month after month with nothing to break the dreadful monotony of continual drills, picket-boat duty and the unceasing lookout for a night attack, but the monthly arrival of the beef-boat from New York with mails and fresh provisions, and an occasional trip outside to the "red-snapper" bank for fresh fish. The smaller vessels had the advantage, as they were constantly on the move. Some cruised outside during the daytime, but all were required to anchor close in-shore at night—one, with picket boats from other vessels, going inside the bar after dark in order to intercept blockade runners, and to serve as outposts.

These vessels were allowed to chase at discretion, but the heavier crafts were not permitted to get under way, except upon signal from the flagship. Off Charleston, the blockading fleet had been driven off by a night attack of the enemy's ironclads, and the admiral was determined that nothing of that kind should happen here.

Accordingly one-half the crew was kept under arms all night, the battery was cast loose, and all preparations for a fight made every evening at sunset, and this continued night after night, week after week, and month after month. Tiresome, irksome and monotonous, are words that sound weak and forceless when used in this connection.

But at last came the welcome news that the monitor "Manhattan" had actually sailed for Mobile, and later that the "Tecumseh" was following her, and later still that two light draft monitors from the Upper Mississippi would be added to the fleet. Then all was excitement and anticipation.

On July 12, the order "to strip for the conflict" was given; vessels were sent in succession to Pensacola to fill up with coal and ammunition, and to land all spare spars, sails and unnecessary hamper. Chain cables were "faked" or hung up and down their sides abreast of engines and boilers, and bags of sand were placed along the decks wherever possible, in order to protect the vitals of the ship. In short every expedient which ingenuity or experience could suggest was resorted to, to protect the vessels and their crews from shot and shell, splinters and falling spars.

Whilst this was going on afloat, General Grant, assuming that the Red River expedition would be successful, was urging General Banks to make a demonstration against Mobile "to be followed by an attack." We all know how disastrously this expedition resulted to our arms, and how Banks' successor, General Canby, instead of being able to make a demonstration against Mobile was rather hard pressed to hold his own. When the time came to despatch a force to invest Forts Morgan and Gaines, it was found that only fifteen hundred men under General Gordon Granger could be spared. Both Farragut and Granger thought this force too small, and it was accordingly decided to invest only Fort Gaines.

The troops were landed on the western end of Dauphin Island, about fifteen miles from the fort, on the evening of August 3, when much to Farragut's chagrin, owing to the

non-arrival of the ironclads, he was unable to move. They immediately took up their march although the night was dark and stormy, and by sunset of the fourth were entrenched about the fort, the skirmish line being engaged.

Before quoting from General Order No. 10, in which Farragut makes known his plan of attack, it is desirable that I should more fully describe the situation of Fort Morgan in relation to the main ship channel by which the attack was to be made, in order to enable you better to understand it. From the bar this channel leads obliquely towards the fort, and because of the torpedoes and obstructions already described, this obliquity was greatly increased, so that the fleet in approaching it was nearly "bows on" and was compelled, as before stated, to pass close under it in order to clear the obstruction. The fort was therefore able to maintain a raking fire as the vessels approached, to which but a small return from the bow guns could be made. Abreast the fort the channel runs parallel to its face. Here the full broadside could be brought to bear, and the fight was more equal; but immediately after passing, the channel makes an abrupt turn to the westward or left, and again a raking fire had to be endured with only such return as could be made by the few stern guns.

I now quote from General Order No. 10: "The vessels will run past the forts lashed side by side."

It should be remembered that in the attack on Forts Jackson and St. Philip which was made at night, the fleet was arranged in two parallel columns either of which could be maneuvered independently of the other. This had not been quite satisfactory, and in the attack on Port Hudson, the vessels were arranged in pairs as here described, but the attack was still made in the night-time.

The results of this attack were such as to convince the admiral that daylight was the best time for fighting in such narrow waters. But to continue :

"The flag-ship will lead and will steer from Sand Island [Sand Island was just inside the bar], N. by E. until abreast of Fort

Morgan, then N. W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. until past the Middle Ground, and then N. by W. and the others will follow in due line but the bow and quarter line must be preserved to give the chase guns a fair range ; and each vessel must keep astern of the broadside of the next vessel ahead. Each vessel will therefore keep a very little on the starboard quarter of her next ahead, and, when abreast of the fort, will keep directly astern, and as we pass the fort will take the same distance on the port quarter of the next ahead to enable the stern guns to fire clear of the next vessel astern.

"It will be the object of the admiral to get as close to the fort as possible before opening fire.

"If one or more vessels be disabled, their partners must carry them through if possible ; but if they cannot, then their next astern must render the required assistance ; but as the admiral contemplates moving with the flood tide, it will only require sufficient power to keep the crippled vessels in the channel."

Farther instructions about mounting the guns and regulating the fire were given, but these I need not quote.

This order was afterwards modified in regard to assistance to crippled vessels and they with their consorts were instructed to look out for themselves and not to embarrass the fighting line. The position of the flag-ship was changed, and at the request of his captains, Farragut permitted the "Brooklyn" to lead, the "Hartford" taking second place.

In his report to the Secretary of the Navy, Farragut says of this change: "They urged it upon me because, in their judgment, the flag-ship ought not to be too much exposed. This I believe to be an error ; for apart from the fact that exposure is one of the penalties of rank in the navy, it will always be the aim of the enemy to destroy the flag-ship, and such attempt was very persistently made."

The class of vessels which constituted the Union fleet is too well known to need an extended description here. The "Hartford," "Brooklyn" and "Richmond" were sister ships of about three thousand tons gross displacement and mounting eighteen nine-inch Dahlgren smooth bore, two one hundred-pounders and

one thirty-pounder Parrott rifle. Their speed was about eight knots maximum.

The "Lackawanna," "Monongahela"¹ and "Ossipee" were about five hundred tons smaller and mounted two eleven-inch Dahlgren smooth bores and one one hundred and fifty-pounder Parrott rifle, with a few thirty-two-pounders in broadside. The "Oneida," the smallest vessel in the fighting-line, had but two eleven-inch Dahlgren smooth bores and a few thirty-two-pounders for a battery. These were more modern vessels, and had a maximum speed of about twelve knots. In addition, each vessel carried one or two howitzers, which were, when possible, mounted in the tops in order to fire over the parapet of the fort.

The smaller vessels were of the classes known as double-enders—side-wheel vessels of light draft, with a rudder at each end—and ninety-day gunboats, so called because they were built in ninety days. These were small screw vessels of about five hundred tons displacement. The batteries of these vessels were, of course, small, but the gunboats carried each one eleven-inch Dahlgren, smooth bore. The "Galena," the largest of the smaller vessels, was a nondescript sort of craft, and carried a light battery. She was built originally as a broadside ironclad, but proving on trial worthless, her plating was removed.

The "Tecumseh" and "Manhattan" were single turret monitors, and carried each two fifteen-inch Rodman, smooth bores.

The two river monitors, the "Winnebago" and "Chickasaw" differed from these in having two turrets, each mounting two eleven-inch Dahlgrens, and in being less heavily armored than the others, whilst they both had twin screws and drew but about six feet of water. There were in all eighteen vessels throwing 9,288 pounds of metal at broadside.

August 5, broke clear and pleasant; no clouds were in the sky, and only a gentle breeze ruffled the surface of the water.

¹ [The writer of this paper was an officer on the Monongahela.—EDS.]

Heavy firing in the direction of Fort Gaines told that the army was engaged, but the sound was soon lost in the opening roar of the engagement with Fort Morgan.

In obedience to signal from the flag-ship, each vessel took her allotted station, and with colors flying from each masthead, the stately fleet moved proudly on, as gaily as if on a holiday parade. The sight was impressive. First came the "Brooklyn" with her consort, then the "Hartford" with hers, and so on to the end of the column, which was closed by the little "Oneida" and her consort, the "Galena." The monitors took position abreast of the head of the fleet and towards the foot from it. Their mission was to account for the "Tennessee."

On board all was quiet and orderly. Every man was at his station waiting. On the bridge stood the captain carefully piloting his ship; at the wheel the quartermaster, alert and watchful, responded promptly with the wheel to his gestures, repeating his unspoken orders in the usual calm, methodical way that he might know they were understood.

The leadsmen called their soundings as calmly as though entering a friendly port.

At the guns, the men stood quiet and collected, and nothing but the general air of expectation everywhere visible gave evidence of what was coming. All preparations had been made and nothing remained but the final test of battle.

The morale of the fleet at this moment was simply perfect. There were but few among the officers and men who had not already smelt burnt powder. All had confidence in their leader, and all saw in the result of the coming event an end to blockade duty. Home and friends could be seen beyond Fort Morgan. Everything conspired to make each man eager for the fight, and none doubted its final result.

The fleet advanced rapidly, but its progress seemed slow. At forty-seven minutes past six, the "Tecumseh" fired both her guns, only to scale them and to load with battering charges and steel shot for her encounter with the ram. Soon, however, the action began, for at seven o'clock and six minutes the fort

opened on the "Brooklyn" with one gun, which was but the signal for all the others to begin. In a few moments, the "Brooklyn" replied, but only with one gun, all that she could as yet bring to bear, and for minutes, which seemed hours, this unequal fight went on. At last she was abreast the fort, and could bring her broadside to bear, and the fight seemed more equal. The "Hartford" too joined in, and soon all in advance was enveloped in a dense white smoke with nothing visible but the red flash of guns and bursting shells. The other vessels, eager for the fight, closed up, and the roar of their guns was added to the awful din.

There was no longer time for merely looking on. Each person had his own particular duties to attend to, and the relief in doing something was great.

As the leading ships pass the fort, its fire perceptibly slackens, and it is evident that in the more equal fight, the fort is overmatched. The enemy's vessels, however, continue to pour in a most galling fire. Where are the monitors? Have they been sunk by torpedoes? The smoke hangs low over the water and they cannot be seen.

The ram is still there, for through a rift in the smoke she is seen making a dash at the line. With a few quickened turns of their propellers, the leading ships are clear of her. Not so with the "Monongahela." Her position is such that she must either ram or be rammed. The decision was made in an instant. With quickened speed she made a broad sweep in towards the fort to gain position. Her bow had been fitted with an iron ram which, as her officers had often jokingly said, would get her into a "heap of trouble." The trouble had come. Gaining a position, she made a rush on the "Tennessee." The shock was terrific, but the ram, not liking the prospect, had taken a broad sheer, and the blow was oblique. The two vessels swung side by side, the bow of one towards the stern of the other, with the little "Kennebec" (the "Monongahela's" consort), sandwiched between them. In this position they hung for some moments, the bow of the "Kennebec" having

caught the ram's life-boat and torn it from the davits. Whilst in this position, the "Tennessee" fired her two broadside guns into the "Kennebec's" lower deck, setting her on fire, and playing sad havoc in that confined space.

About this time, too, the ram's colors came fluttering down, and many thought she had surrendered, but they were soon undeceived.

No serious damage was done to either vessel in the encounter, but the direction of the ram's head was so changed by it that she was not able to gain a position to ram the rear vessels of the fleet, and they all escaped without injury except from her guns.

But why had the monitors permitted the ram to make this attack? and why as the smoke cleared away were there but three to be seen? and, what was more strange, why was the "Hartford" leading the "Brooklyn"?

The answers are soon given. We last saw the monitors ranged between the head of the fleet and the fort, the "Tecumseh" leading. In making a dash for the ram she was struck by a torpedo and sunk, going down by the head in an instant, her stern with the propeller still revolving, showing for a moment in the air as she disappeared.

Seeing this appalling disaster and also a row of torpedo floats directly ahead, the "Brooklyn" hesitated and backed to clear them, thus throwing the head of the line into some confusion. Farragut knowing that hesitation meant defeat, with that promptness of judgment which always characterized him, ordered his consort to back whilst the "Hartford" went ahead, thus turning the pair as on a pivot and swinging them clear of the "Brooklyn." Then going ahead at full speed with both vessels, he assumed the lead. As he passed the "Brooklyn," her captain reported "a heavy line of torpedoes across the channel." The reply was brief if not characteristic, "Damn the torpedoes. Go ahead."

The "Brooklyn" quickly followed, the line was reestablished, and the fight went merrily on. As the vessels cleared the

fort, their consorts were cast off with orders to engage the enemy's gunboats. A running fight took place which soon resulted in the capture of the "Selma," the burning of the "Morgan," whilst the "Gaines," owing to her light draft of water, escaped to Mobile.

It was a very pretty affair while it lasted. The rear of the fleet suffered severely in passing the fort, and the "Oneida" was disabled by a shot in her boiler, but her consort brought her safely through. The "Tennessee" withdrew under the fort. The day, so far, had been decided in our favor, but the victory was by no means won.

The "Tennessee" still remained uninjured and capable of infinite mischief in the narrow waters to which the fleet was now confined. The events of the morning had shown her to be very formidable. Shot and shell seemed to produce no effect on her. Only in speed had she shown weakness; but this was of less account as her opponents could not run away.

The space was so confined that there was no chance for maneuvering, whilst with so many vessels fighting, they were quite as likely to injure their friends as the enemy. And if this would be the case by daylight, what would it be at night? Clearly something must be done, or the experience of the "Merrimac" in Hampton Roads would be repeated, only on a larger scale.

There is no safety for the fleet whilst she remained in the enemy's hands. Should she remain under the fort, there she, and the fort too, must be fought. In short, the whole battle must be fought over again. The question was not left long in doubt. Stopping only to refresh her men, she steamed out from the fort, and with sublime confidence, turned her head up the bay — one vessel against sixteen. With colors flying, she made directly for the flagship, ignoring all lesser fry. The perfect confidence which the commander of the "Tennessee" had in his vessel, and the absolute, imperative necessity which Farragut was under to capture or destroy her, rendered the fight which then took place, whilst it lasted, one of the most

desperate on record. There was but one possible outcome to it. One side or the other must either surrender or be destroyed.

Signal was made by the admiral to run down the ram at full speed. "Then," in the language of a sailor, "the fight begun." The "Monongahela," apparently anxious for further "trouble," was the first to make the attempt. Making a broad sweep to gain speed and position, she made a gallant dash at her, this time striking her a tremendous blow on her starboard beam. Up to almost the instant of collision, the ram paid no attention to this attack, but continued her course for the "Hartford." Just before the "Monongahela" struck her, she put her helm aport, and thus obtained a slight sheer. The blow was therefore slightly oblique, and being also a little abaft the center of her length, the result was to spin her around as if on a pivot. No impression was made on her hull, and the bow of the "Monongahela" slid along her smooth side until it slipped off past her stern. Whilst the two vessels were actually in contact, the ram fired her broadside, but without doing much damage, and the "Monongahela," as she passed her stern, fired one gun after another as they could be brought to bear, but the solid shot bounded off from her side like peas from a shovel. Here again as in the first attempt, the direction of the ram's head was changed, and she was no longer pointed towards the flag-ship.

Scarcely had the "Monongahela" cleared her, when the "Lackawanna" came rushing down, then the "Hartford" and the "Ossipee" tried it, whilst the other vessels clustered around, each getting in a shot wherever there was an opening. The scrimmage at this time greatly resembled a dog fight with a dozen dogs engaged.

The little river monitor "Chickasaw" took position directly under the ram's stern, and having greater speed and turning quicker was able to hold on there. No matter what way she turned, there was the "Chickasaw" holding on like a bull-dog. A shot from her guns entered the stern port and wounded Admiral Buchanan.

The "Manhattan" planted a solid fifteen-inch shot fairly against her casement, and though it did not go entirely through, it penetrated the armor and was only held by the wooden backing, and greatly assisted in demoralizing a crew already well shaken up by repeated rammings.

About this time, her smokestack was shot away, and her head was turned towards the fort. Her steering gear had been cut and temporarily repaired. Evidently she had had enough. But closer hung her enemies about her. Again her steering gear was shot away, and helpless and inert on the water, with all the heavier vessels coming down on her again, her crew so demoralized that they would not stand to their guns whilst being rammed, she hauled down her colors and surrendered, apparently a hopeless wreck.

But she was far from being a wreck. New wheel ropes were rove, a new smokestack improvised, and two days later, under the Union colors, she was sent down to pay her compliments to the fort as good as ever. During the action she had but two men killed and nine wounded.

The surrender of the "Tennessee" ended the fighting for that day, and practically there was no more worthy of the name as compared with what had taken place. Fort Powell was abandoned and blown up that night. Fort Gaines surrendered the next day, and though Fort Morgan was besieged and stood a heavy bombardment, in which the "Tennessee" took part, before surrendering on August 23, it was so closely invested that it could make no adequate reply.

The loss of the fleet during the action of August 5 was, killed, fifty-two; wounded, one hundred and seventy; total, two hundred and twenty-two, or about thirteen per cent. of the force engaged. This did not include the loss on board the "Tecumseh" which amounted to about seventy-five, but I am unable to give the exact number.

AN EXPERIENCE IN THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS.

By Brevet-Major HOLMAN S. MELCHER.

IN the Commonwealth of Old Virginia there is a tract of forest land about fifteen miles square, extending south from the Rapidan River toward Spottsylvania court-house and equidistant from Fredericksburg on the east and Orange court-house on the west ; or, to be more specific, from Chancellorsville on the east to Mine Run on the west.

The forest of this historical region is occasionally broken by small farms and abandoned clearings, and watered by numerous streams and brooks there designated as creeks and runs, which flowing northerly empty into the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers. This country is generally level, or slightly undulating, with several eminences that might be called hills near the center of this tract.

The region rests on a belt of mineral rocks, and for more than a hundred years extensive mining operations were carried on, in its early history by Alexander Spotswood, then governor of Virginia, whereby he received the title of Tubal Cain, not only of Virginia, but of North America.

To feed the mines, the timber of the county for many miles around was cut down, and in its place there had arisen a growth that did not have the ordinary features of a forest. With the larger growth there arose a dense undergrowth of low-limbed and scraggy pines, stiff and bristling chinkapins, scrub-oak, and hazel.

It is difficult to make way through this growth except by the paths and wood-roads that intersect it in many directions, but known only to those familiar with the region. Ways for travel were opened from east to west by the Orange court-house turn-pike, and the Orange court-house plank road, which run nearly

parallel from Fredericksburg to Orange some five or six miles apart, and south of the plank road there was a railroad unfinished at the time of this narrative.

The traveled way from north to south was by the Germanna plank road from Germanna Ford of the Rapidan to the Wilderness Tavern, thence by the Brock Road to Todd's Tavern and Spottsylvania court-house.

It can be truthfully said that there is nothing in or about this region that was either interesting or attractive. One writer says of it, "It is the region of gloom and the shadow of death."

This condition was terribly emphasized when in the course of events there met in battle in that horrible thicket nearly two hundred thousand men. Through it lurid fires played, and though no array of battle could be seen, there came out of its depths the crackle and roll of musketry like the noisy boiling of some hell-cauldron that told the dread story of death until twenty-five thousand brave men were swallowed in its fiery vortex.

When the Army of the Potomac was organized, preparatory to the campaign of 1864, by an order from the War Department, dated March 23, the five infantry corps were consolidated into three, the Second retaining its number and receiving into its organization the Third, excepting one division assigned to the Sixth Corps, and the Fifth retaining its number and receiving the First Corps (or what remained of it after its sacrifice at Gettysburg), which constituted the Second and Fourth Divisions of the new Fifth Corps, now numbering about twenty-five thousand men,—too large an organization to be handled to the greatest advantage in the densely wooded country in which occurred the campaign of 1864.

The brilliant and able commander of this magnificent corps was Major-General G. K. Warren, and his division commanders were Major-Generals Charles Griffin, John C. Robinson, S. W. Crawford and James S. Wadsworth,—all brave and tried officers.

The Third Brigade of Griffin's First Division was made up of seven veteran regiments, 1st and 16th Michigan, 83d and 118th

Pennsylvania, 44th New York, 18th Massachusetts and my own regiment, the 20th Maine, all under the command of the gallant soldier, Brigadier-General J. J. Bartlett.

In the absence of Colonel Chamberlain on court martial duty, my regiment was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Ellis Spear. About two weeks before the opening of that eventful campaign, I was assigned to the command of Company F, the company in which I held the commission of first lieutenant but had been detailed from, acting as adjutant of the regiment since the battle of Gettysburg. Captain S. T. Keene of the company, being second in rank, had been assigned to the duty of acting-major; and on account of his rank it gave my company the left in right line of battle.

During the winter a large number of recruits had been sent to the regiment, mostly substitutes and bounty jumpers, and I found on assuming command of the company, that there was quite a quantity of the rawest kind of recruits to be drilled up to the standard of soldiers. But it took only a short time to satisfy me that, with few exceptions, this new material was not the proper kind out of which to make good soldiers, and only the most persistent drilling and careful instruction would bring them to the grade of doubtful efficiency. The work was pushed forward as fast as possible by the aid of my non-commissioned officers and example of the veterans of the company, true men and tried, who survived that fearful slaughter on Little Round Top the July preceding, when ten were shot dead and thirteen fearfully wounded in this company of forty-three that carried the colors of the regiment through that terrible conflict.

The position of my regiment, guarding the railroad bridge over the Rappahannock, was favorable for all kinds of drill, as the isolation from the rest of the brigade gave room for skirmish drill and long range target practise, which was made much of during the two weeks I had for this purpose; so that considering the character and utter lack of knowledge of all military matters on the part of these recruits, not one of them knowing how even properly to load a rifle, much more correctly

to aim in firing, we got them up to a fair standard when the grand movement came, and we marched at midnight, May 3-4, crossing the Rapidan on a pontoon bridge at Germanna Ford, plunged into the Wilderness, and there settled down on our fated veteran First Division of the Fifth Corps the terrible nightmare of the troubled dream of war.

To explain what I mean by this statement it is only necessary for me to say that in the three days' battle in the fearful thickets of the Wilderness our First Division lost six thousand men out of the twelve thousand that entered so fearlessly into the contest on the morning of May 5.

Pushing forward with all possible haste, we reached the Old Wilderness Tavern about two o'clock P. M. of the fourth of May, and moved westward along the Orange Pike, bivouacking about one mile out toward Orange court-house on both sides of the road, to await the coming up of the Sixth Corps, which went into line on our right, and the Second Corps, which moved off toward the left near Chancellorsville.

The night was quiet and restful after our long forced march, but the bugles sounded an early reveille for the forward movement. Coffee had been made and drank, and when about ready to draw out into the pike to resume the march, some cavalry scouts that had been out far in our front during the night came galloping down the road, with word that the rebel army was advancing along the pike from Orange court-house and were already this side of Robertson's Tavern, and not over two miles away.

Affairs changed very suddenly; arms were stacked, shovels and picks brought up, and every man worked with a right good will to throw up earthworks along the line we had bivouacked on during the night, which was on a slightly wooded crest of a ridge running across the road. The pioneers cut down the trees in front of the works to give range for our fire, and sharpened out the limbs to make a temporary abatis.

A battery of Napoleon guns came up and took position between our regiment and the one on the left, and by ten o'clock, covered by a goodly line of works and supported by

batteries, we expected and hoped for an attack, but that little arrangement was too much to our liking to be realized. You know we almost always had to take hold of the other end of the poker, and so it was in this case, for after waiting for an attack of the enemy till about twelve o'clock, orders came to "advance and attack in force," and climbing over the line of works we had erected with so much interest and pleasure, we pushed out through the thick woods in our front,—the right of my regiment resting on the pike,—till we came near an open field, where lines were carefully formed, my regiment being in the second line of battle. The bugles sounded the "Charge" and advancing to the edge of the field, we saw the first line of battle about half way across it, receiving a terribly fatal fire from an enemy in the woods on the farther side.

This field was less than a quarter of a mile across, had been planted with corn the year before, and was now dry and dusty. We could see the spurts of dust started up all over the field by the bullets of the enemy, as they spattered on it like the big drops of a coming shower you have so often seen along a dusty road. But that was not the thing that troubled us. It was the dropping of our comrades from the charging line as they rushed across the fatal field with breasts bared to the terrible storm of leaden hail, and we knew that it would soon be our turn to run this fire.

As we emerged from the woods into this field, General Bartlett, our brigade commander, came galloping down the line from the right, waving his sword and shouting, "Come on, boys, let us go in and help them!" And go we did. Pulling our hats low down over our eyes, we rushed across the field, and overtaking those of our comrades who had survived the fearful crossing of the front line, just as they were breaking over the enemy's lines, we joined with them in this deadly encounter, and there in that thicket of bushes and briers, with the groans of the dying, the shrieks of the wounded, the terrible roar of musketry and the shouts of command and cheers of encouragement, we swept them away before us like a whirlwind and scattered a part of Johnson's and Rhodes' Divisions of Ewell's

Corps, namely, Jones' Brigade of Johnson's, and Dole's and Battles' of Rhodes' Division, and pursued them like hunted hares through the thick woods, shooting those we could overtake who would not throw down their arms and go to the rear.

This pursuit with my company and those immediately about me continued for about half a mile, until there were no rebels in our front to be seen or heard ; and coming out into a little clearing, I thought it well to reform my line, but found there was no line to form, or to connect it with. I could not find my regimental colors or the regiment. There were with me fifteen men of my company with two others of the regiment. I was the only commissioned officer there, but my own brave and trusted first sergeant, Ammi Smith, was at my side as always in time of danger or battle, and with him I conferred as to what it was best to do under the circumstances.

There was nothing in front to fight that we could see or hear, but to go back seemed the way for cowards to move, as we did not know whether our colors were at the rear or farther to the front. I was twenty-two years old at this time, and Sergeant Smith twenty-three, so that our united ages hardly gave years enough to decide a question that seemed so important to us at that moment.

While earnestly considering this question, one of my men came to me and said, "Lieutenant, come this way and let me show you something." Following him, he led me to the Orange Pike, and pointing back down that straight level road he said, "See that !" I looked in the direction he pointed and saw that which froze the blood in my veins and made my heart almost cease beating for a time. Some half a mile down the road from where we had just charged up through in our advance, I could see a strong column of rebel infantry moving directly across the road into our rear, completely cutting us off from the direction we had come.

I quickly surmised what I learned soon after was true, that the First Brigade that charged with us on the right of the pike

had been repulsed in the advance, and that my regiment had been ordered to halt when this was discovered, and being outflanked on the right, had fallen back. But my company being on the extreme left of the regiment, I had not heard these orders, nor seen the colors halt, on account of the thick woods, and so had rushed forward beyond the rest of the regiment. But now the question was, what should we do?

I called all my men together, stated to them how I understood the situation, and said, "Now, my men, as for myself, I had rather die in the attempt to cut our way out, than be captured to rot in rebel prisons. Will you stand by me in this attempt?" It was a moment that tried men's souls, and boys' too, but the resolution was quickly formed, and every one said, "Yes, Lieutenant, we will and gladly, too." I looked in their faces and I knew there was not one that would fail me. They were all men who had been tried in the fires of Antietam, Fredericksburg, Aldie, Gettysburg, Rappahannock Station and Mine Run, and had never been found wanting.

None of my "recruits" were there. They had all been lost in the first shock of the charge, of course. I said, "Every man load his rifle, fix bayonets and follow me." And with Sergeant Smith at my side we started to cut our way out to "liberty or death."

In order to pass around the right of the rebel line if possible. I took a course as far from the pike as I dared to and keep a direction so as to come out somewhere near the works we had thrown up in the morning, in case we succeeded in getting out, as that was the only spot on the earth that seemed a desirable objective to me under the circumstances.

The hope of getting around the rebel right proved vain, however. On approaching their line, we found it extended farther to the right than we could see. Our only chance was to cut our way through.

Forming our "line of battle" (seventeen men beside myself) in single rank, of course, with Sergeant Smith on the left while I took the right, we approached quietly and unobserved, as the

"Johnnies" were all intent on watching for the "Yanks" in front, not for a moment having a suspicion that they were to be attacked from the rear, until we were within ten or fifteen paces, when on the first intimation that we were discovered, every one of our little band picked his man and fired, and with a great shout as much as if we were a thousand, we rushed at them and on to them, sword and bayonets being our weapons. "Surrender or die!" was our battle-cry.

They were so astonished and terrified by this sudden and entirely unexpected attack and from this direction, that some of them promptly obeyed, threw down their arms and surrendered. The desperately brave fought us, hand to hand; the larger part broke and fled in every direction through the woods, and could not be followed by us or our fire, as our rifles were empty and there was no time to reload.

This was the first, and I am glad to say, the last time that I saw the bayonet used in its most terrible and effective manner. One of my men, only a boy, just at my side, called out to a rebel to throw down his gun, but instead of obeying he quickly brought it to his shoulder and snapped it in the face of this man, but fortunately it did not explode, for some reason.

Quick as a flash, he sprang forward and plunged his bayonet into his breast, and throwing him backward pinned him to the ground, with the very positive remark, "I'll teach you, old Reb, how to snap your gun in my face!" And this was only one scene of many such I saw enacted around me, in that terrible struggle. How I wished my sword had been ground to the sharpness of a razor, but the point was keen and I used it to the full strength of my arm.

I saw a tall, lank rebel, only a few paces from me, about to fire at one of my men and I the only one that could help him. I sprang forward and struck him with all my strength, intending to split his head open, but so anxious was I that my blow should fall on him before he could fire that I struck before I got near enough for the sword to fall upon his head, but the point cut the scalp on the back of his head and split his coat

all the way down his back. The blow hurt and startled him so much that he dropped his musket without firing and surrendered, and we marched him out with the other prisoners.

In less time than it has taken me to tell this we had scattered the line of battle and the way was open for us to escape. Two of our little band lay dead on the ground where we had fought, and several more or less severely wounded, but these latter we kept with us and saved them from capture. By spreading our little company out rather thin we were able to surround the thirty-two prisoners we had captured in the melee and started them along on the double quick, or as near to it as we could and keep the wounded along with us.

The Confederate line soon began to rally and fired after us ; but as there were many more of the Gray than the Blue in our ranks, they hesitated to do much firing, as they saw they would be more likely to kill friends than foes.

When our prisoners discovered how few were their captors and how near their many friends, they slackened their pace, refusing the orders to double quick, and seemed inclined to turn on us. Seeing this I drew my revolver, and I have always regretted I did not have it in my hand instead of my sword during the struggle we had just been through ; but it served me a good purpose now as its seven barrels were loaded, all of which might be needed. Halting the squad and cocking my revolver I said, "The first man who does not keep up in his place will be instantly shot." As this little speech was made in as fierce and emphatic a manner as a boy could do it, they appeared to think that the threat might be carried out, and when I shouted, "Forward, double quick!" they trotted along right lively.

As we were rushing along I noticed one of our "recruits" squeezed up behind a log. I said to him, "Come on, come along with us, George, or you'll be captured." His only response to my order was, "Don't let them know I am here." We could not stop to drag him out and so had to leave him to his fate. He was captured and never returned to our regiment. I

afterwards learned that he starved to death in the Andersonville Prison Pen, as all of us undoubtedly would, had we not dared to act on the one chance that we had to escape.

One of our prisoners was a captain, who was badly wounded in his side, and though we made the other prisoners take turns in helping him along, it was very painful to him to be moved at the rate at which we were marching, so that when we got well away from the enemy's line, and came to one of our own regiments that had not previously been engaged, but had been sent forward to cover the falling back of our broken line, I asked the colonel commanding to take this wounded captain off our hands until we could get our prisoners to a place of safety, and left another prisoner to take care of him while we pushed on with the others. After turning over our prisoners to the provost marshal, we went back to take out the two we had left behind, but the regiment had changed its position and we did not find it, and so did not get the balance of the prisoners we captured in the first instance.

I was too much excited and exhausted to ask the colonel who he was or what his regiment, and never had an opportunity to ascertain afterwards. I have never ceased to regret that I left those prisoners with him, as he was a very pompous officer, and I suppose he claimed them as his legitimate captures. Had we retained them in our ranks we could have safely got them out by taking more time, but I was fearful that we might not come out as we planned, possibly might fall in with some of the enemy's skirmishers in the woods, and with the embarrassment of a badly wounded officer on our hands might lose all of our other prisoners.

In taking our prisoners out we struck our main line some distance to the left from the place where we had thrown up works in the morning, and finding ourselves safely within our lines marched directly to our division headquarters where we delivered the thirty prisoners that we had in charge. After our captured were disposed of, we made our way to the point in our line from which we had moved out to make the charge,

where we found the survivors of our regiment already comfortably established in the works.

As we came to the regiment we were greeted with exclamations and inquiries, as it was supposed we had all been killed or captured in the fight. Captain W W Morrell, commanding Company A, a young officer only a few years my senior, said to me, "Well, lieutenant, how did things look down at Rappahannock Station?" When you recall the fact that Rappahannock Station was our winter quarters, you will at once see the sarcasm and implication carried in the remark. It implied that we had been panic stricken in the battle and fled to the rear, not stopping in our flight until we were back to our winter camp, and after recovering from our fright, and desiring to return to our regiment, had fixed our bayonets and were marching in order to give the impression that we were a provost guard and not a band of cowards and stragglers. His remark stung me like a viper, and had he thrust me through with his sword the wound would not have been more painful, nor would it have taken as long to heal had it not been for what occurred three days later, when in the hand-to-hand contest with the enemy at Laurel Hill, Spottsylvania, on the night of May 8, he was shot dead at my side, and in attempting to drag off his body after the battle I became unconscious from the bleeding of my own wounds and we were both carried back together, he to be buried in the woods where we had been fighting, I to the hospital and recovery after a long and painful experience. Thus death established its truce over its victim. As has been intimated in this narrative, it was a very delicate thing for an officer to lead those under his command to the rear during a battle, and I had felt very anxious for fear I had made a mistake in so doing, for had I not been correct in my premises and the regiment had not gone back before we did, I should have been exposed to the charge of cowardice and conduct unbecoming an officer; but as our little company brought out more prisoners than all the rest of the regiment I had begun to feel very comfortable, and to think I had not made a mistake after

all ; but when met by this implied charge of misdemeanor, I was too astonished to make answer to the cruel words, but recognized the importance of having proof that we were not guilty of the charge he made ; so hastening back to division headquarters, and tearing a piece of paper from a letter in my pocket, I wrote a receipt for the prisoners we had turned over and for which I did not think of asking a receipt at the time. The provost marshal signed it and it has been carefully preserved till this day and I will read from the original :—

“ H’d. Qrs. 1st. Div., 5th Corps.

“ May 5, 1864.

“ Received of Lieut. H. S. Melcher

“ Thirty (30) Prisoners (rebel).

“ Jas. D. Orne,

“ Capt. Pro. Marshal,

“ 1st. Div., 5th Corps.”

I returned to my command tired and with wounded feelings, yet I had in my pocket, where it has ever since remained, an unanswerable defense to the charge made.

Referring to my diary which I kept during the war I find recorded under date of May 5, 1864 : “ We packed up to march this morning, but hearing that the enemy were advancing on us we threw up earthworks, waited till noon, but as they did not attack we charged them. It was a severe charge and a bloody battle, but I got off safe bringing out thirty prisoners.”

You will see that all I have told in my story is covered by the brief account in my diary, and perhaps it would have been more agreeable to you had I used the diary to tell the story of this “ Experience in the Battle of the Wilderness.”

OUR ESCAPE FROM CAMP SORGHUM.

By Lieutenant CHARLES O. HUNT.

OCTOBER 6, 1864, the officers who were prisoners of war in Charleston, S. C., were ordered to be moved to Columbia. The reason for the change was alleged to be on account of yellow fever, which had made its appearance in Charleston. We received the order with regret, and would gladly have risked the fever, rather than leave our pleasant and healthy quarters in Roper Hospital, where we had more comforts and privileges than at any other place of confinement in the South. Our mess, at this time, consisted of Major Charles P. Mattocks, 17th Maine Infantry, captured in the Wilderness, May, 1864; Captain Julius B. Litchfield, Company B, 4th Maine Infantry, captured at Gettysburg, July, 1863; Lieutenant Nathaniel A. Robbins, Company H, 4th Maine Infantry, captured at Gettysburg; and myself, captured June 18, 1864, at Petersburg. When we were at Columbia, Captain E. A. Burpee, 19th Maine Infantry, joined us.

We left the prison in the afternoon, but it was late in the evening before our train of box cars started. The cars were crowded, and some of us obtained permission of the guards to ride on the top of the cars, and we even slept in this precarious position, with some narrow escapes from being thrown off.

Arriving in Columbia the next day, we were "yarded" like so many cattle, in a small enclosure near the station. It was large enough for us all to lie down, but not much more. There were about fifteen hundred of us. During the afternoon there was a heavy shower, which soaked everything we had on, as well as our blankets, and rendered the ground a quagmire; and in this condition we were obliged to worry away the night, sleep being out of the question. The only satisfaction we got out of this day's miserable accommodation was the discovery that a

wooden building, which formed a part of the enclosure on one side, was filled with bacon, and you may be sure it did not take those Yankees long to find a way by which they could live off the enemy. A board was loosened, and a goodly quantity of the meat was quickly transferred to the haversacks of those who were fortunate enough to be in the secret. The next day we took up our line of march for our new quarters. We were taken out of the city, and across the river Congaree by the covered bridge, which was burned the next spring when Sherman made his appearance on the other bank, opposite Columbia. After marching two or three miles, we were turned off from the road a short distance into an old field partly covered with scrub pines, where we were halted and a line of guards thrown round us, and we were informed that this was our destination. They made promises that plenty of tents would soon be furnished us, but like most of the rebel promises to prisoners, they were not intended to be kept, but only to keep us quiet. The tents were never given us, and all the time we were there, we had to take the weather as it came, with only such shelter as could be made out of pine boughs, or by sacrificing blankets which were needed for bedding. Our mess was rather better off in the way of supplies than most ; for when in Charleston we had with us two naval officers, who were exchanged, and left to the rest of us their supply of blankets, and a small mattress that one of them had obtained in some way. So, with two blankets put up for a tent, and one end closed with brush, we managed to be partly sheltered during the rains. But many of the men had no blankets, and must have suffered very much, especially later in the season. We had plenty of fresh air, and my impression is that, notwithstanding the discomforts, the prisoners were, as a rule, healthy. Then again we had plenty of room. We were not crowded as they were at Andersonville. We probably would have been if there had been as many of us, for want of a sufficient number of guards. Then we had reason to be thankful that there was no stockade about the enclosure, so that we had the pleasure of seeing the surrounding country,

and for other reasons to be mentioned presently. The camp was surrounded by a line of guards, and a few feet inside their beat some stakes were driven to mark the dead-line. Between us and the road was the camp of the guard, and on a little knoll, opposite the northeast corner of our camp, was a light battery which commanded the whole enclosure.

An attempt to count the prisoners was made every morning. We were obliged to fall in in two ranks in the open space near the dead-line. The line extended along the whole front of the camp and well down the westerly side. Before the counting began, a line of guards went through the camp to force all who were able to go to the line, and to count in their shelters any who were too sick to go. The counting was done from right to left. The order to remain in line till the counting was finished could not be enforced, and as the officers went down the line, those on the right slipped back to their quarters, and more or less of them fell in on the left and were counted again. I doubt if they ever made the count twice alike. When men began to escape, this method of making up deficiencies was pursued with a good deal of regularity and system.

The rations here consisted principally of corn meal, issued raw, and sorghum molasses. The latter article was the only thing in the shape of food that was given to us while we were in the Confederacy in such quantity that we had more of it than we knew what to do with. We even had candy parties to use up the surplus. On account of this abundance, the camp was named Camp Sorghum. We may have had an occasional issue of bacon, but I am not sure of that. Of fresh meat, we had none—except on one occasion there was a rather novel and amusing issue of fresh pork. It happened one day that an old boar, of the racer variety, ran the guards and headed for our camp. No sooner was he inside of the line than there was a rush for him. In a few minutes, something like a thousand howling men were tearing about the camp after that poor hog. But he was built for speed. He could run like a race-horse, and dodge like a cat, and for some time his chances of saving his bacon seemed

about even. But at last a great, long-legged fellow, who seemed animated by the spirit of the boy who was after the woodchuck, threw himself on the hog's back, with his arms round his neck and brought him down. The rapidity with which that hog was slaughtered and cut up and scattered to the four quarters of the camp would have put to shame a first-class Chicago butcher. Meanwhile the cause of the tumult was unknown to the guard, and they were thrown into a state of great excitement. The long roll was sounded, the battery was manned and everything was made ready to resist an attack.

All the rations being issued raw, the cooking was a serious problem. No cooking utensils of any kind were furnished, and some of the poorer messes found it difficult to get their food supplies into eatable condition. With us, as in the great world, a man's standing in society depended very much on his worldly possessions. Only here the standard was somewhat different. If a mess had several tin plates and cups, they were well-to-do. If, in addition to these, they had a mess-kettle, frying-pan and an ax, they were among the aristocracy. And, if more than all this, they had a few hundred dollars of Confederate money, they belonged among the "Four Hundred." They were in condition to bestow favors, and hence their society was cultivated. At this time our mess was in position to claim a place among the aristocracy, but could hardly be admitted to the inner circle.

We had been rich in Charleston, but had spent our money freely, and now found ourselves cut off from the source of supplies and rapidly approaching the end of our means. But we still had our ax, our kettle and our frying-pan, and could hold our heads pretty high. Our money was spent cautiously. What we could get the most of, rather than what we liked best, was the chief consideration.

The question of fuel soon became an important one. At first we cut off the pine trees which were in the camp. But they were few and small, and were soon exhausted. It did not seem to occur to the rebel authorities that they were under any

obligation to furnish us wood. To save themselves trouble in this matter their first expedient was to extend the guard line, in the form of a semicircle, into the woods which came quite near two sides of our camp. Within the line we could go and cut wood enough for several days. When all the wood had been cut off from such territory as they could enclose with their rather scanty guard, they tried another plan. Every few days a wood party was made up. Its members signed a parole not to escape, and they were allowed to go to the woods without a guard, and cut and bring to camp as much wood as they could. One would have supposed that the rebels would have been sharp enough to compel the party to go out and come in, in a body. But instead of that, they allowed them to go and come as they chose, making several trips, generally two or three together in order to carry the heavier logs. I do not think any of the men violated their parole, strong as the temptation must have been when they found themselves alone in the woods. But it was soon discovered by the prisoners that it was possible for some who had not given their parole to pass out with the rest when making their second trip, without being detected. As our little apology for a tent was on the front line of the camp, near where the parties went out, we soon caught on to this little dodge, and determined to seize the first opportunity to make a strike for freedom.

By this time we knew of quite a number who had escaped in one way or another. Some watched at night, as near the guard line as they could be without being discovered, till two sentinels turned their backs to each other, and then ran for it, taking their chances of being shot, which were not very great. Others had gone out with the wood parties, as we were planning to do. But we also knew that, almost without exception, they had been caught and brought back. It was not so difficult to get out of the prison camp, but the real difficulty was in traveling so far through their country to reach a point held by our troops. At that period of the war almost every able-bodied man was in the army, and the mere appearance of two

or three men in the country, even if disguised by citizen's clothes, was sure to excite suspicion. We fully realized that we would probably be caught and brought back before we had gone fifty miles from the prison, but we felt that it would be rather disgraceful not to make the attempt when the opportunity was before us.

Some of our acquaintances had a small map of South and North Carolina and Tennessee, and of this we made a tracing. This showed only the principal towns and main roads. Captain Burpee had a very good pocket compass, which in some way he had managed to keep possession of. As I have said, our camp was on the west side of the river Congaree, opposite Columbia. We saw, by our map, that the Saluda River made a junction with the Broad, forming the Congaree, near Columbia, but on account of its small size we could not tell whether the junction was above or below the bridge by which we crossed from the city. We decided that in case we escaped, we would take a northwest course through Newbury, Laurens and Greenville Counties, into North Carolina, and then, by way of Asheville, try to make our way down the French Broad River, and so on to Knoxville, a distance of some two hundred miles or more. We decided also that we would travel by the main roads at night, lying concealed by day, believing that in this way we could make better progress than by attempting to travel through the woods by daylight. Litchfield had made an escape before from Salisbury, and we had the benefit of his experience, though it was very limited.

At length the day and opportunity came when we were to make our attempt. November third there had been a cold rain all day. In the afternoon Litchfield came in, and with some excitement informed us that a party was out for wood, that some of the men had come in and were going out again, and if we were going to make the attempt, now was the time.

The only cooked food we happened to have that day was part of a loaf of flour bread. This we divided and put into our pockets. As it was cold and rainy, a blanket could be worn

over the shoulders without being noticed, for this was a common practise. Litchfield and Mattocks did this, but I, fearing lest it might excite suspicion to see so many blankets going out, decided to put on an extra flannel shirt instead. I wished afterward that I had done as the others did. The map and the compass were given to us, and we waited our chance.

Almost directly opposite our little tent was the camp of the guard, with the officers' tents nearest the prison enclosure. Still farther away was a road running easterly and westerly, the same by which we came out from the city of Columbia. The wood party went out this road toward the west for some distance and then turned to the right into the woods.

When the right time seemed to have come, we started boldly toward the guard line, bearing off to the left, so as to strike the line some distance from the camp of the guard. As we approached the line, to our disappointment, the sentinel halted us. One of the party explained that we were going out for the rest of our wood. His reply was that we could not get out there. I remarked as carelessly as possible, "Never mind, boys, we can get out at post No. 1," which was the one directly in front of the officers' quarters. The guard only said, "He may let you out if he chooses, but you can't get out here." So we sauntered along the line to post No. 1. Just before we reached the post, Mattocks, who was in advance called out, "Come, hurry up, boys, or those other fellows will steal all the wood we have cut," and following we marched past the guard without being challenged. As we passed through the camp of the guard we held our breath, and with a good deal of effort restrained our impulse to hurry. The road was soon reached, and walking as rapidly as we dared, we soon came to the woods.

When we were out of sight, we struck into a double quick in a course at a right angle to the road, till we felt that we were far enough away to make it safe to hide. Then we lay down close to a fallen tree and waited for night. While we remained there, when it was beginning to get dark, a sergeant with a squad of men passed through the woods, quite near to us, appearing as

if they were looking for something. We had a horrible suspicion that we were the objects of their search, and we hugged the ground closer than ever till they had passed on. It was about three P. M., when we left Camp Sorghum, and we lay here till about 5.30 P. M. It was then quite dark, but there was light enough to see the compass and get our direction. We had not gone far before we found ourselves on the bank of a wide, deep river. Here, then, was the Saluda, above us instead of below, as we hoped. If we should follow the stream up toward its head waters, one of the first dangers would be that we would be obliged to cross the main road, which was more or less guarded, especially at the bridge. From where we stood on the bank, we could see the picket fires near the bridge with the guards standing around them. Then, such a course would take us far out of the line of march we had planned to take.

On these accounts we decided to make the attempt to cross the river where we were, by swimming. The river at this point must have been from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards wide. Mattocks was a good swimmer, Litchfield was only fair, but I was a poor one. In hunting along the bank, we found two small pieces of plank, partly water soaked. They could not have been more than six or eight feet long, for I remember that in swimming with our feet, unless we were careful, we kicked each other. We all wore high boots. For some reason we decided not to take them off. It may have been for fear of losing them, or of wounding our feet, or perhaps we felt some uncertainty as to whether we could get them on again after they were wet. Whatever the reason, we went into the water with all our clothes on. The bank was steep with deep water close up, and it was some time before we found a place where we could get a footing on the edge of the stream, preparatory to our final plunge. The blankets were folded and put on the two ends of the planks. Mattocks had a watch which he put into his hat. Litchfield had the right, Mattocks the left, and I the center. All things ready, we stepped off into deep water, with our hands on the plank and swimming with our feet.

The water was very cold, our blood was thin, and the chill of that plunge is still very vividly remembered. In the darkness we could not very well estimate the width of the river. Our progress was slow, and after long effort, I looked back over my shoulder and said despondently, "Mattocks, the shore we have left looks much nearer now than the other side." I shall never forget Mattocks' reply. It was characteristic of the man. "Don't look back. Look ahead and kick out." He was always plucky and never despondent under the most discouraging circumstances. Then came another long struggle in silence. Finally Litchfield broke out in despairing tones, "My God, Mattocks! we never can get across." Again Mattocks' cheery reply was, "Yes, we can. Look ahead and kick out." I must confess visions of our dead bodies floating down the river came up before me very vividly. But still we struggled on, till at last, when it seemed as if all our powers were exhausted, we reached the other shore. The bank was covered with a dense thicket of bushes, whose branches extended well out to deep water, so that we could get no footing. We were obliged to cling to these bushes for some time, till we could get our breath and rest a little, before we could drag ourselves out through them on to dry land. It was a cold night and we were thoroughly chilled and exhausted. The first thing to be done was to get rid of as much of the water in our clothes as possible. Trembling as if in an ague fit, we took off the clothing from the upper part of our bodies, coat, vest and shirts, and wrung them out as dry as we could. We did not dare to take off our boots, for fear we could not get them on again. So we emptied them by lifting up our feet behind, and let the water drain out through the knees of our trousers.

This accomplished, the next point was to get into the road a safe distance beyond the bridge. My impression is that there was a mill up the stream, somewhere near the bridge, and that we could hear the noise of a fall, or of the machinery, and that this was the guide by which we had an idea of the direction we should march. We had first a large ploughed field to cross,

which, on account of the recent rain, was very muddy and hard traveling. Beyond the field we struck into the woods. Here it was so dark we could not see anything two feet away, and we were constantly getting separated, and had some difficulty in getting together again, as we did not dare to speak above a whisper. To obviate this difficulty, we formed in single file, each holding to some part of the garment of the one before him. In this way we stumbled along in the darkness, for what seemed a long time, frequently stopping to get our bearings by the sound of the mill. At last we struck a dirt road which soon led us to the pike, which we reached at nine P M.

About this time the weather cleared off cold, with a high wind blowing in our faces. We were glad to strike out at a rapid gait to get warmed up, as well as to get as far as possible away from the prison before morning. We soon realized that we had made a mistake in not taking off our boots and stockings before swimming the river. For, with these wet, we had not walked far before our feet were blistered in many places. This was the cause of much suffering for a long time. We marched at as good a rate as we could till four A. M., when we began to look for a place of concealment, where we could spend the day. Our first trial was a barn by the roadside, intending to bury ourselves in the hay, as Litchfield had done on his former escape. But to our disappointment we found the barn entirely empty. Nothing was left for us but to take to the woods some distance from the road. Here we lay down and tried to sleep. But with wet clothes on, and with wet blankets and the wet ground to lie on, our sleep was not very sound or refreshing.

Our sleeping arrangements, then and subsequently, were as follows: we had but two blankets; we spread one on the ground and put the other over us. The blankets were not very large, so we lay as close together as possible, spoon fashion, and when one turned over all turned. As the one in the middle was the only one thoroughly well covered and fairly warm, the privilege of this place was enjoyed by turns.

When daylight came we found we were in a very open piece of woods with no good place of concealment ; but we hardly dared to go farther lest we might be seen. While deliberating what we had better do, a negro commenced chopping wood not very far from us. It seemed necessary that we should speak to him, for the purpose of getting food, as we had had nothing to eat since the previous day's dinner except the little water-soaked bread we had in our pockets. This was now reduced to a pulp, and was well mixed with tobacco crumbs. Litchfield, whose former experience as a runaway had taught him that the negroes were to be trusted, was selected to interview him.

At this time, as in all subsequent cases, when we wanted help from a negro, we always told him plainly that we were Yankee officers who had escaped from prison, and needed his help. We never met one who showed any disposition to betray us to the whites. Most of them showed great willingness to help us all they could. Some seemed inclined to get an equivalent for the food they gave us, and I remember one surly fellow who would have nothing to do with us, and would not so much as talk with us, but even he promised that he would not inform his master of our being in the neighborhood.

This man whom Litchfield now went to see, whose name was Daniel, was one of the best of the negroes whom we met. The first thing he did was to take us to a thicket of pines, not far away, where we could spend the day without danger of being seen. He agreed to bring us food after dark, as it was out of the question for him to attempt to do so at any earlier time. The sun shone a part of the day, but it was a long, cold day for us, sitting on the damp ground in our wet clothes, and with empty stomachs. We spread our coats and blankets out in the little patches of sunshine which came through the trees, but they did not dry much. When evening came we waited impatiently for Daniel and the food. Time passed on and he did not come, till we were almost in despair. But at last we heard him coming, whistling a merry tune, and he made his appearance in our little thicket, with an ax on one shoulder and a bag

slung over the other. He explained the ax by saying that he took it so that if he met any one "they wouldn't suspicion anything." I believe he was going to imply that he was out after a coon. But the contents of the bag interested us more than anything else. He said he "brought a few taters, just to keep your heart up. De folks am cooking something for you up at de house." Hot sweet potatoes! How good they tasted after a day and a half of fasting! When we had somewhat blunted the keen edge of our appetites, we asked him if he could not take us up to his house to get warm and dry. At first he hesitated, but we urged him and he finally yielded. As his cabin was in the rear of his master's house and on the other side of the turnpike, we made a detour so as to cross the pike at some distance from the house, and get to the cabin from the rear. This, like the negro cabins generally, was a log house containing but one room with a large fireplace on one side. There was a blazing fire which furnished light as well as heat. You can imagine how grateful to us was the heat of that fire. We hung our blankets and coats before it to dry, and then stood in front of the wide hearth, turning round and round, till we were thoroughly warm and dry, more comfortable than we had been for many a day.

Beside Daniel, there were two or three women in the house, and two young negro men, who seemed inclined to keep in the dark corner of the room. Daniel explained that they were "travelers," which I suspect meant runaways, but he assured us that we were safe so far as they were concerned. Meanwhile the chicken was frying, the corn bread baking and the sweet potatoes roasting in the ashes. We did not ask to whom the chicken belonged when alive, but ate what was set before us, asking no questions for conscience sake. We ate rather sparingly, however, for we wanted to take along with us as much as we could. While we had confidence in the negro's fidelity, yet we felt that we ran some risk every time we made ourselves known to any one, and to reduce that risk to a minimum, we determined to live on as short rations as possible. We learned

that we had marched during the previous night about fifteen miles.

So after being warmed and fed, and having paid our dusky friends what we could spare from our scanty stock of Confederate money, we tied up the remains of our supper in our handkerchiefs, and started out for our second night's march about ten P M.

On this night of November 4-5, we did not accomplish much. Our blistered feet were the cause of much suffering. The life of inaction we had led for several months was poor preparation for the exhausting work and exposure of the previous night, and we soon found ourselves weary and obliged to stop, having made only five miles.

The plan in regard to sleeping and eating which we followed through the whole trip was this. Having made our night's march, we looked out for a thick piece of woods at some distance from the road, and in the best hiding-place we could find we lay down and slept as far into the day as we could. Then for our breakfast we ate a very small amount, only enough partially to satisfy our hunger. We ate nothing more till shortly before it was time to start out on the next night's march, when we allowed ourselves a more liberal allowance for supper. We commenced our night's march by half-past seven or eight in the evening, or even earlier sometimes if there were not many houses on the road. Generally the houses were all dark before nine o'clock.

On the night of November 5, we started at 7.30 P M., and got on without mishap till midnight, when we found a fire in the road ahead of us, which we supposed to be a picket fire. In attempting to flank it, we were lost in the woods, and after wandering about for several hours we gave it up and went into camp. In the morning we found to our disgust that we were within a stone's throw of the road. Sometime during the day a white man came very close to us, and for a while we thought our game was up, so soon. But to our great satisfaction he passed on without looking in our direction.

On the evening of the sixth, we started out at eight o'clock with a determination to walk all night. But we did not realize what torture we would have to endure from our blistered feet, and although we made a fair night's march we went into camp much earlier than we intended. Our camp at this place was on the side of a small hill, well covered with low pines which overlooked a large cornfield. In the morning we heard negroes at work in the field, and, as our food supply was almost exhausted, it was thought best to interview them. We found them safe and they promised to bring us supplies after dark. On the strength of that we ate for breakfast all we had left, not a very heavy meal however, for we had already subsisted two days on what we had saved from our supper at Daniel's. Our negro came as he promised after dark, but to our great disappointment he brought us only a few sweet potatoes and a bottle of sorghum molasses. He gave as an excuse for the meager supply that they were out of meal, and so could not give us any bread. But he promised that if we would wait till the next night they would bring us a good supply. Much as we disliked to lose the time, yet considering the condition of our feet, and as this was a very comfortable and safe camp, we decided to rest this night.

November 8 found us much refreshed by a good night's sleep. After the negroes came to the field to work, watching till the white overseers had left them, we signaled and one of them came to the edge of the woods, and we persuaded him to bring us a brand from a fire they had, which enabled us to enjoy the luxury of a smoke for the first time since our escape. This was the day of the presidential election, when it was to be decided whether McClellan or Lincoln was to be at the head of the Government; whether the war was to be declared a failure, or was to be prosecuted to the bitter end, even to the sacrifice of "the last man and the last dollar." As the law allowed soldiers to vote in the field, we decided to hold an election, and with much solemnity cast our ballots. The vote when counted proved to be unanimous for the Republican candidate,

but I am quite sure that it did not increase Maine's Republican majority. The diary closes the record of this day by saying, "We have been spending the day very quietly and pleasantly, talking of what we will do when we get home." Rather premature as it proved. We waited this evening till ten o'clock before there was any sign of anything to eat, and then an old darky made his appearance with nothing but a very small piece of corn bread, a few baked potatoes and some raw ones. He and the other darkies appeared to be thinking more of the pay they hoped to get than any desire to help us along, and probably our appearance did not give the impression of great financial strength. We found out from the old man that we were not on the right road for Newbury court-house, but he took us across lots, started us right, and we struck out at a good gait determined before morning to get beyond that town which was distant nine miles. The night was warm and we found it very fatiguing. But before we started we cut holes in our boots over the worst of our blisters, so that our feet did not trouble us much. We reached Newbury between two and three A. M. We had planned to flank the town, but before we were aware of it we found ourselves well into the outskirts of the village, and as everything was quiet and the houses all dark, we concluded to push on. We got through safely, but beyond the town we had difficulty in finding the right road. Our plan was, as I have said before, to keep the main county road running through Laurens court-house to Greenville. In the vicinity of towns, where there were numerous roads, we had the most trouble. If there was a guide-board we were all right if we could read it in the darkness. When we could not make it out from the ground, as I was the lightest of the party, and Litchfield was the tallest (he was six feet two inches), he stooped down and I mounted his shoulders, and by the time he had straightened up I was generally near enough to the board to make it out if there was any light at all. In the absence of a guide-board, when we came to a fork, we took the road which, by the compass, seemed to go nearest our general direction,

northwest. But sometimes after traveling some distance we would find its direction changing so much we would go back and try the other one. We had a great deal of perplexity in this respect on this night, trying three different roads and then were not satisfied that we were right. But we got a safe distance away from Newbury before it was time to take to the woods. This was one of my hardest nights, and the following day was a blue one, as I began to fear lest I was the weak one of the party and would have to fall out and give myself up so as not to detain the others.

The following evening, November 9, we started again as soon as it was dark, and for some hours made good time, when we suddenly found that some people were coming along the road toward us, and were already quite near. We instantly dove into the bushes by the side of the road, but some noise we made caused a scream from two or three negro girls who were in the advance. We learned afterwards that they had been having some kind of merrymaking at a house beyond and were just breaking up. Although we felt relieved when we found that it was a negro party, we did not care to discover ourselves to a crowd, so lay still till they recovered their courage and passed on. Later we found one man alone, to whom we made ourselves known. He was a good fellow, of a different stamp from our niggardly acquaintances of the night before, and by midnight he came back to us with a generous supply of bread and potatoes. While we were waiting here we were joined by Captain Baker, a late resident of Camp Sorghum, and he informed us that there were three others in his party who were not far off. He also said there was another party of four close by and that seven had been captured in Newbury two nights before. The negro also said two more had gone on two nights before. From midnight till four A. M. we made good time, and we were sure we were on the Laurens road, as it was marked by mile-posts giving the distance from the courthouse. There was a light rain the last part of the night and

after we went to bed, but not enough to wet us or to cause discomfort, and the following day was clear and warm.

The next evening, November 10, we did not start till nine o'clock. The moon was getting large now (I find by the almanac of that year that it was full the thirteenth), and on clear nights we could not safely start till people had gone to bed, which was usually before nine o'clock. Soon after getting into the road we passed the fifteenth mile-post from Laurens court-house. Between ten and eleven o'clock we reached a little village called Clinton. It was nothing more than a small collection of houses straggling along on the one street, hardly worthy the name of village. Ordinarily at this time we could have been sure that everybody would be sound asleep. But on this night they were having a dance there and several houses were well lighted up. I wonder that we did not take to the fields when we found the situation, but we had grown bold and as the road seemed clear we pushed on, looking in at the windows as we passed at the revelry which was at its height. Just as we got clear of the house and began to congratulate ourselves on another danger passed, to our consternation we met a white man. The moonlight was almost as bright as day, but there was nothing we could do but drive straight on. He looked hard at us but said nothing. Neither did we. Now we thought we had surely reached the end of our journey in this direction. As soon as we had got a safe distance we broke into a run, and for the next six miles we ran almost all the way, expecting every minute to hear dogs and men in pursuit. When we could get no further, we dropped down under a tree by the roadside to rest. To our delight we found that the tree was a persimmon and the ground was well covered with the ripe, delicious fruit. It was a great treat to us who had had nothing in the shape of fruit for months. While we were resting here we were joined by Captain Gordon, Captain Nolan and Lieutenant Powell. As small parties were safer than large ones, we gave them the road, and after they had had time to get

a good start, we took up our line of march. We reached Laurens court-house, which was quite a village, between two and three o'clock and pushed straight through it without incident and kept on for seven miles further before we took to the woods, having made twenty-two miles this night.

November 11, we started again in good season. Quite early in the evening we met a negro to whom we made our usual appeal for food, and found him of the right sort. He went home at once and set the women to cooking, while we lay in a fence-corner near the house. When the food was ready, the whole family came out to see us, the old negro man, two or three women and several children, one little piccaninny in the arms of its mother. As they stood in the moonlight talking with us in low tones, they made an exceedingly picturesque group which is very distinctly remembered, and when we were ready to start they wished us "God speed," "safe journey," and other good wishes. But their interest did not expend itself in words, for the diary says they brought us a lot of potatoes, two cakes, a bottle of molasses, a bottle of milk, tobacco and some grease for our boots and sore feet. It was our custom to talk with these people about the war and its bearings upon their future condition (not entirely disinterested perhaps). It was a surprise to us to find how thoroughly they realized what the results were to be, and how well informed they were of the course of events. These people here seemed specially intelligent. They told us how their masters talked to them about the Yankees; told them they had horns, and that they would carry them off to a more horrible slavery than anything they had experienced. They said they pretended to believe all that was told them, "But Lor', Mars', we know better."

With plenty of food and in good spirits we went on and marched sixteen miles before we made up our bed in the woods just before daylight.

The next evening, November 12, we started on the road at eight o'clock. We soon passed a mile post which showed us that we were sixteen miles from Greenville.

It was our plan, when we were to pass a town, so to arrange our night's march as either to stop three or four miles before reaching it or to go as much beyond it. On this night, when we were at this distance from Greenville, it was still early, and the question came up whether we should make a camp or push on. Mattocks was in favor of stopping lest Hunt should give out before we had gone a safe distance beyond Greenville. There had been times when I had found it hard to keep pace with the rest, but on this night I was feeling remarkably well, the marching was easy, and I assured him he need have no fear of me. Litchfield was impatient and anxious to push on. Still Mattocks showed a great deal of solicitude in regard to my powers of endurance, and several times urged the necessity of stopping. But we would not listen to it. Evidently we were not marching so well as the night we went through Laurens, for it was four o'clock before we reached Greenville. We found it a very much larger place than Newbury or Laurens, but we planned to go straight through as we had the other places. Everything went well till we reached the outskirts on the west-erly side, when we found a fire in the road before us which compelled us to take a cross street running to the north. We had hardly got outside the houses of the town when Mattocks said, "Boys, I don't feel very well," and down he dropped in a dead faint. We opened his shirt collar, and to our relief he soon revived, and we got him on his feet, but he had hardly taken a step before he went down again. We let him lie longer this time, and then carefully assisted him over the fence out of the road. It was getting dangerously near daylight by this time, and after resting as long as we dared, we started for some woods not far away. Mattocks put his arms over our shoulders and we half carried him. He was ready to admit now that his anxiety to stop the other side of Greenville was for his own sake rather than for Hunt's.

Daylight soon came and we found that we were in an open oak growth which did not conceal us in the least. While it was still dusky, a young negro girl came down a path from the

direction of the town. Litchfield went for her to implore her to take us to some place where we could be safe for the day. But Litchfield, with his long gaunt figure and ragged clothes, and an old gray blanket over his shoulders, was not very prepossessing in his personal appearance, and the wench was evidently afraid of him and would have nothing to say to him, but hurried on faster and faster till she broke into a run. We were disappointed and not a little alarmed at this, for we did not have the same confidence in the town negroes that we did in those of the farms. But something had to be done, for we were not half a mile from the town, and wagons and men on foot were beginning to pass along the road not far away. We were fortunate in finding, at no great distance, a hill on which was a small patch of low pines, which gave us a fairly good place of concealment. This was Sunday, and I remember how pleasant and homelike the church bells sounded. But we soon heard another sound which was not homelike at all. A man and a hound passed up the valley just below us, the dog baying every minute or so as if he was on the scent of something. We immediately concluded that the negro had given us away, and they were hunting for us. For a while we gave up all as lost, and prepared to defend ourselves against the dog, which we momentarily expected to see bursting into our little thicket. But to our relief they went on and were soon out of hearing.

November 13. We started again at the usual time this Sunday evening. Fortunately we found the main road which led from Greenville toward the mountains without difficulty. We had to walk slowly on Mattocks' account, and for the same reason we made a short night of it, going into the woods at one o'clock, having made only seven miles.

It was very cold this night, and for the first time we made a little fire and sat round it till daylight, when we carefully put it out and went to sleep. Our food supply was getting low again, but in the afternoon we were fortunate enough to find a negro who promised to supply us at night. As soon as it was dark,

our man Daniel called for us and took us up near the farm buildings where we could more conveniently wait till his people could cook us something. But we waited in vain, for no Daniel came. As we came out of the woods by a farm road we passed a small log cabin standing by itself, a long distance away from the other negro quarters, which was occupied by an old negro woman who lived there by herself. Quite late in the evening, when we had become quite discouraged and cold and hungry, we went back to this house to see what we could do with the old woman. We had hard work to make any impression upon her. She sniffed and snorted and said we had better go about our business, and that she hadn't anything for us. Litchfield with great earnestness argued the case with her, endeavoring to show why the negroes should feel gratitude to the Yankee soldiers, that through them freedom was surely coming, etc., etc. It came out, at last, that she thought we were rebel soldiers, but when she was finally convinced, she treated us handsomely, cooking a good hot supper for us. Not having entirely lost faith in Daniel, we went back to wait in our former position. Close by us was an immense pile of sorghum refuse, that is, the stalks from which the juice had been extracted by crushing. In prowling over this pile of damp straw, I came upon two or three hogs that had burrowed into it till they were almost covered. It seemed to me that that was too comfortable a bed for them to monopolize. So giving them a kick, I sent them to seek other quarters, and dropped into their place. It was delightfully warm, and in an instant almost I forgot that we were watching for Daniel, and knew nothing more till Mattocks waked me up with the information that it was most daylight and we must go back to the woods. Nothing had been heard of Daniel. It was a disappointment to lose this night, but, as we were getting up among the mountains, where we were not so likely to find negroes (and we did not dare to trust anyone else), we were afraid to go on without some supply of food. If we had known then what we learned afterwards, we might have

gone to the master of the plantation himself and asked assistance because we were Union soldiers, for he was at heart a Union man.

At daylight I visited the old woman again, and made a satisfactory arrangement with her to furnish us food for our march the coming night. The day was spent in the woods as usual, but as soon as it was dark, we went back to the cabin and had a hot supper, and she had a good supply of bread and meat for us. While we were here, much to our delight, Daniel came with more bread and meat and some grease for our boots, some matches and a meal bag to carry our supplies in. It seemed that his master had kept him at work so late the preceding night that he had no chance to get anything for us.

November 15, at 11.30 P M., we were ready for the road again. We were now approaching the Blue Ridge and traveling was harder, and although we marched till nearly daylight, we only made nine miles. Our camp was made on the side of a mountain which rose sharply from the road. During the day Mattocks made from the meal bag three very serviceable haversacks which did us good service during all the rest of our prison life.

Of the night of November 16-17, and the following day, the record only says, "Marched through Jones Gap last night," and I do not remember anything about the night's march or the day's camp.

The next night, 17-18, soon after we started, we came to another of those fires in the road. From what I learned afterward, I think it was customary for those who were teaming long distances, to camp by the road when night came. But to us they were always picket fires. We avoided this one by passing over to another road which ran nearly parallel to the one we were on. By this time our food was gone again, and there seemed to be little prospect of getting a new supply. However, some time during the night, we passed a corn-field with the ears still on the stalks. For want of something better, we each took a few ears in our haversacks. Toward morning,

we found our road was petering out, and soon it terminated at a pair of bars.

As it was too late to do anything more that night, we climbed well up the side of the mountain so that when daylight came we could look over the country and decide what our course should be. We were now in North Carolina, in that western corner which is separated from South Carolina by the Blue Ridge and from East Tennessee by the Great Smoky Range; and all the country between these ranges is filled up with mountains innumerable. There are some narrow winding valleys along the streams where there are small farms, but the population is sparse and the houses scattered at long intervals along the mountain roads.

It was such a country we looked over the next day from our camp on the mountain side. We remembered passing, some miles back, a road which turned off sharply to the north, but we gave it no consideration as we were still intent on keeping our general direction to the northwest. But on studying our map we were convinced that if we were to go to Asheville, we must take that direction, now that we had come through the Blue Ridge, and we determined to try that road when night came. We had nothing to eat except the raw corn. We did not even dare to build a fire to parch it. It was a blue day.

November 18, as soon as it was dark enough to travel, we started on the back track. Before we reached the road we were in search of, we came to a house in the back yard of which, only a few feet away, was a small house which looked like a negro cabin. Litchfield and I hid behind the fence and Mat-tocks cautiously crept up to it, and through a crack in the logs, reconnoitered the interior. To his satisfaction he found the only occupants two negro women. A gentle tap with the finger-nail. "Who's dare," from one of the startled women. "A friend, open the door." After considerable hesitation and consultation, the request was granted, and explanations followed which were satisfactory, and soon we were all three enjoying a smoke around their fire. But it was still comparatively

early in the evening, and the lights were not yet out in the master's house, and the women were uneasy lest something might bring the mistress out to their cabin before she went to bed. So we were taken to the barn to wait for the bread which they immediately made preparations to bake. But before we went they told us something which made us very hopeful for the future. They said, "If you could only find Uncle Jack Loftis he would help you." "Who is Uncle Jack Loftis?" was our query. "He is a white man, but he is one of your people," meaning that he was a Union man. Then there was much anxious questioning as to how we could find this man. It appeared that he lived about six miles away. The road was carefully described, and the direction given, that after we should pass a certain bridge, his house was the sixth, this, after going over, between themselves, the names of the different families which at long intervals lived on the road by which we were to travel. They told us many things about Uncle Jack, and how he managed to keep out of the rebel army, and among other things that he made apple-jack. As soon as our bread was ready, we hurried off, impatient to meet this man whose help was so important to us.

After marching two or three miles, although it was now late in the evening, near midnight I think, we found to our surprise that there was a house ahead of us quite brilliantly lighted, and as bad luck would have it, just before we reached it the door opened, and out came a large company of young men and women, some coming in our direction and some going the other. Not a moment was to be lost, and we threw ourselves over the fence and waited for them to pass. But a miserable dog in the company, whose nose and ears were altogether too good, came tearing down to the fence barking furiously not two feet from us. We could not stand that and took to our legs across the fields, expecting every minute to hear the sounds of pursuit. But nothing came of it, and we gained the road again and pushed on as rapidly as possible. We soon found the bridge described by our colored friends, and then came the

count of the houses. Five were passed, then came the sixth, a house standing back from the road, and even in the dim light having a forsaken aspect. It was my turn to make the investigation, for whenever anyone was to be spoken to never but one of us showed himself, so that if anything was wrong, the others might have a chance to get off. To our great disappointment, I found the house empty, with the windows all broken out, and it had evidently been uninhabited for a long time. Here was a dilemma. Had we made a mistake in the count? Had the negroes made a mistake? Was the right house the last one passed, or the next one beyond, were the questions asked, but could not be answered. We went on and when we came to the next house the discussion was resumed. Was it not probable that the negroes had forgotten the other house because it was uninhabited? At first we decided that we would run no further risk and we went on for a mile or two. But the night had been threatening, it was evident that a storm would soon be on us, and the chance of getting under a roof seemed very attractive. I was in favor of going back and was willing to take the risk of going to the house. It was agreed that Mattocks and Litchfield should hide at a safe distance and if, after waiting a reasonable time, I did not appear, they were to go on. Or if everything was not right, and I could get away, I was to come down the road at the double quick and we should strike off into the mountains which rose up almost from the roadside. With my heart in my mouth I gave a very gentle tap at the door. There was no word spoken inside, or light struck, but I heard a light noise as if one had slipped out of bed quietly, and in a moment the door opened. A gray haired old man stood before me. I asked him if this was the road to Asheville, what the distance was, and about the character of the roads, etc., meanwhile trying to make up my mind whether I should commit myself to him or not. But at last I screwed up my courage and asked him if his name was not Loftis. He said it was, and then I told him who I was, and that I had been directed to him as one who would be willing to help me. Meanwhile he had, without

my noticing it, slipped his hand under the edge of the blanket I had over my shoulders, and caught one of the brass buttons of my blouse and turning it up to the dim light said, "I guess you are all right, but I did not know but that it was a trap set for me." Then he asked if I was traveling alone. I told him there were two more down the road. "Well, go and get them and I will take care of you." With a lighter heart than I had known for a long time, I ran down the road to carry the good news to the others, forgetting what that extra speed was to indicate to them. Before I could get to them, they had picked up their traps and were already in full headway for the mountains. But a cautious call brought them back and we were quickly under the old man's roof, telling our adventures and making plans for the future. You can imagine, better than I can describe, the exuberance of our happiness when we found ourselves in a safe shelter where we could rest and be fed, and with a good prospect of being forwarded safely to "God's country." He told us that we were not the only Yanks in that vicinity, but that quite a number from Camp Sorghum were scattered about at different houses among the mountains, and among them some of our personal friends. He had helped several parties and had their autographs in a little book, to which we added ours. But the night was well spent by this time, and he did not dare to keep us in his house during the day, for he knew he was suspected and was liable to have a visit from some of his rebel neighbors.

Down at the bottom of the field back of the house, quite a distance away, was a little building where he had his cider-press and apples, and under the eaves a little loft, where he told us we would find blankets and quilts, which some of the other boys had used before us. With the promise that he would bring us some breakfast in the morning, he left us. Unable to sleep from happiness and excitement, we lay for a long time munching apples and kicking up our heels and congratulating ourselves on our good luck, and to add to our comfort, by contrast, the rain we expected came down in torrents.

With the morning came Uncle Jack and the promised breakfast, and never before or since have I eaten a meal that tasted so good as that one. Beef boiled and fried, corn bread and flour bread and fried potatoes, and a big pot of hot rye coffee, and no lack of that sauce which would make a worse meal enjoyable. The quantity showed he had a just appreciation of what three half-starved men could do in the gastronomic line. We realized then that hunger was not simply a matter of an empty stomach. We ate till our stomachs could contain no more, but made no impression on our appetites. We paid the penalty of our imprudence for hours while our poor stomachs were struggling with the surprise we had given them.

In giving us our breakfast, Uncle Jack said, "Boys, that is Reb beef." We did not at the time understand the full significance of the remark, but before we left him we heard some strange tales of the condition in which they were living in that section. All that mountainous region of western North Carolina, like the eastern part of Tennessee, was largely inhabited by a race of mountaineers, who cultivated their small farms in the narrow valleys. They had never owned slaves and were bitterly opposed to secession. The rebel element was found in the towns and among the richer planters. There was no love lost between these two classes. The conscription was enforced without mercy. To avoid it, many of the men went over the line into East Tennessee and enlisted in Federal regiments. Many others lived in hiding-places in the mountains, rarely daring to visit their families, and then only by night to get needed supplies. Among them were many who had been conscripted, but had deserted. The rebels frequently made raids into the mountains to pick up these men. And on the other hand these men of the mountains did not scruple to make raids on the property of their rebel neighbors, killing their cattle or seizing anything they could lay their hands on. When they met, generally there was shooting at sight. Our friend had escaped the conscription, as he was supposed to be exempt on

account of his age, though the real fact was that he was not so old by ten years as he was thought to be. There was a good old granny with easy conscience, who went before the authorities and swore she nursed him when he was a baby, and that he was born in such a year, putting it far enough back to make him safe.

When he left us this morning, he said that after dark he would come for us and take us to the house for supper, which he did. On the way we took part in a curious ceremony. Instead of taking us in at the back door as we expected, he went on by the house a little distance, only saying, "Come this way, boys." Here was an old pair of cart wheels, such as may be seen in any farmer's back yard. Getting down on his knees under the axle he began to scrape away the dead leaves and grass. Then apparently he lifted up a short piece of board. Next came a short round piece of wood about three inches in diameter and one inch thick. Then, from the grass near one of the wheels, he drew out a long stick which looked like a reed pipe stem, and, apparently thrusting this into the bowels of the earth said, "There, boys, suck away at that. It will do you good." As I have already said that old man made apple-jack; further explanation is unnecessary. We were certainly in prime condition for a good supper and a pleasant evening. We were now presented to the other members of the family, who were Mrs. Loftis and a married daughter who had an infant son. Her husband, I think, was in the mountains. The supper was a repetition of the breakfast and was almost as keenly enjoyed. By the time we were well under way the apple-jack began to put in its perfect work. I remember how Litchfield waxed eloquent as he discussed the questions of the war and his excessive politeness to the ladies. His plate and his cup, in their frequent trips to our hostess for new supplies, were always accompanied by, "If you please, Mrs. Loftis." Mattocks as regularly made apology for his phenomenal appetite by saying, "Fact is, Mrs. Loftis, we've been living on raw corn for three

days." Of what the other member of the party said and did there is no record.

We spent a happy evening around the blazing fire, smoking and telling our own adventures, and learning of the hardships the Union men there were suffering as the result of their loyalty. The night and the next day (which was Sunday, November twentieth) were spent in the loft. In the afternoon we had a visit from an old lady, whom everybody called Aunt Becky, and her two nieces. Aunt Becky was intensely loyal. She said, "I ain't afraid of those rebels. I tell them, 'you may hang old Aunt Becky if you want to, but with the last breath I draw I will shout, Hurrah, for the Union!'" She made Uncle Jack promise not to let us start to cross the mountains without sending her word, for she had a few chickens and she wanted to cook some of them for us to take with us.

We went up to the house at night, as before, and while there word came that all the Yankees in that neighborhood were to rendezvous the next day at the house of a Mr. Hamilton, about ten miles from where we were, to make arrangements to go over the mountains. This Mr. Hamilton was deputy-sheriff of the county, but was a true Union man notwithstanding. This was what they called keeping out of the army by means of a "bomb-proof office."

As we were to start the next morning before daylight, it was decided that we should sleep on the floor in the sitting-room instead of going back to our loft. Meanwhile preparations were immediately begun to fit us out for our march. Word was sent to Aunt Becky to get her chickens ready and send them over before morning. Bread and beef were cooked in sufficient quantity to give us generous rations for three days, which was supposed to be abundant time for us to reach friends on the Tennessee side. Then inquiry was made as to the condition of our stockings, as good stockings were very essential for a tramp over the mountains. Litchfield and I were fairly well off in this respect, but Mattocks' were in the last stages of

dilapidation. Our good friends were in a state of perplexity, for they said they had given away almost every pair they had to some of the other boys who had preceded us. The daughter said she would see what she could do, and left the room, and soon returned with a pair of thick woolen women's stockings, and Mattocks always declared that she had taken them off her own feet, as they were warm when she gave them to him.

Litchfield was very much attracted to the baby, as he had a little one of his own at home, and as the child had not yet been named he asked that he might be called Julius Litchfield, which the mother promised to do.

Either this night, or the next day, we were joined by a nephew of Uncle Jack, a boy of seventeen or eighteen, who had kept away from the conscription gang by hiding in the mountains. Not long before he had narrowly escaped capture, so narrowly that he received a shot through the forearm, which had not yet healed. It was not thought safe to try to keep him there any longer, and he joined our party to go over to the Union lines.

Long before daylight, we were awakened for our early breakfast, and then, with Uncle Jack as a guide, we went over to Mr. Hamilton's, where he left us and we never saw him again. But right here I will say in a parenthesis, that three years ago I saw in the *National Tribune* a sketch of the trials of the Union men of North Carolina, which was signed by H. D. Loftis of Knoxville. I wrote to him and found that he was a nephew of Uncle Jack, and a brother of the one who was with us. From him I got his uncle's address and have had several letters from him, and at the time of the last letter all of the family whom we saw were still living. The baby, now a man, was really named Julius Litchfield. Aunt Becky is dead and one of the nieces, but the other is married and living in Texas.

At Hamilton's, eighteen officers collected during the day. The important point for us to settle was whether we could get a guide competent to lead us through the mountains. There

are no roads in this section and the mountains are all heavily wooded. Wherever the hardwoods grew, principally oak and chestnut, there was no undergrowth, and traveling was comparatively easy. But wherever there were balsams, as they call the firs, there is an undergrowth of laurel which forms an impenetrable thicket. Hence it was necessary that a guide should be perfectly familiar with the landmarks, in order to keep in the hardwood timber.

A man whose name was Gilbert Semple was sent for, who was a deserter from the rebel army, and the proposal was made to him to take us through. He seemed unwilling to undertake the job, although he claimed that he was perfectly familiar with the country and knew the way. If we could only have been content to wait a week or ten days, we would have had a sure thing of it, for one of Kirk's men was in that section recruiting for a loyal Tennessee regiment, and he expected to be ready to take his men through in about that time. But we were all impatient to get home, and we urged this man with all our powers of persuasion, finally offering him five hundred dollars as soon as he got us to Knoxville. This turned the scale and he agreed to go.

This was the twenty-first of November. I have no further record from which to fix dates. The last entry in my diary was made the day before we left Uncle Jack's. After that I thought I should so soon be at home it was not worth while to write any thing. I think we remained at Hamilton's two days. We Yankees wanted plenty of fires and lots of wood, but there was nothing in the yard but a little miserable trash. The principle that seemed to actuate most people in that section was, never to do anything to-day that could be put off till to-morrow. When they wanted fuel they took an ax and went out into the woods and broke up a few dead limbs, just enough to last for the day. This was not the way we Yankees were brought up, and some one proposed that we go into the woods and get up a good stock of fuel. So we spent the largest part of one of the days we

were there in cutting, splitting and piling up in Hamilton's back yard more wood than, probably, was ever there at one time before or since.

The weather in the mountains at that time was as cold as it is here in November. There was snow on the higher summits and ice in the streams. We left Hamilton's on the twenty-third, I think. We were a company of twenty, eighteen Union officers and two North Carolina men, and during the first day's march we were joined by another one of the natives. We had three full days' rations, which we were sure would be more than sufficient to last us till we reached the Union people of East Tennessee and we made no attempt to husband our resources. Every night but one we camped in the woods, lying round large fires, and were perfectly comfortable. The one night we slept in a house gave us a glimpse of a typical mountain family of the most shiftless sort. They lived in a log house of one room. There were beds in one corner where the heads of the family, with grown-up daughters and younger children all found a sleeping-place. There was a fireplace so capacious that there was room in it, not only for the fire in the middle, but for the old folks to sit well in on each side of the fire, and a chimney so large that you could stand in the fireplace and look straight up to the stars. The spaces between the logs were open in many places, as I remember one man expressed it, "holes big enough to sling a cat through." It was a bitter cold night and it disgusted us to see these people crouching over a miserable little fire, shriveled with the cold, but without energy enough to do the little honest labor that would have added so much to their comfort. The only door generally stood wide open. One of our men mildly asked if we could not have the door shut, and the indifferent answer was, "Yes ; I s'pose you mote."

How the people got to bed I don't know, but the rest of us ranged ourselves in a semicircle with our feet to the fire. Our sleep was sound, and the next thing I knew, I was awakened before daylight by a strapping young woman straddling over our prostrate forms, poking up one after another with the remark,

"Here, you uns, get up! One of my stockings is down here under you somewhar."

One day the mountain trail we were following passed the house of a rebel recruiting sergeant. He was believed to be away from home, and to avoid loss of time and hard travel through the woods, we decided not to try to go round it, but to keep to the trail. When we reached the house, to our consternation, we saw the sergeant sitting just inside the open door, eating his dinner. Our North Carolina men were equal to the emergency. They went straight up to him and shook hands and to his inquiries as to who we were they told him that we had all been hiding out in the mountains, that it was getting cold and we were tired of it, and we had decided to go over to Qualla and enlist with Major Parker. The sergeant was much pleased with our decision, and encouraged us by saying that we would not have to go to the front. We would only have to make a scout occasionally over into Tennessee to steal horses and cattle from the Union men. Some one told him that, as so many of us were going in, we should expect to be treated fairly about the offices; that we ought to have a corporal or two among us, or a sergeant's place. He answered that it would be all right. We left him apparently without a suspicion that we were not all we pretended to be. We had two or three East Tennessee officers with us, and as they could talk with the peculiar twang of the mountains, they were put forward to join in the conversation, while the rest of us discreetly kept in the background. This helped the deception.

But meanwhile we had been traveling for three days, and all the time either going up a mountain or going down one, and a considerable part of the time with about three inches of snow on the ground. But we saw no signs of the Union settlement and our food began to give out. Anxious inquiries were made of the guide if he was sure he knew where we were. Oh, yes! he knew the way all right. But we began to be careful of the little food we had left and to pick chestnuts whenever we could find them. The twenty-sixth went by and still we did not

get anywhere. On the morning of the twenty-seventh, as we were ascending a narrow valley, we were stopped by the laurel thicket. The laurel was on the right and on the left, and the open woods had been growing narrower and narrower till we found ourselves in a pocket. For an hour or two we tried to get to the top of the ridge by forcing a way through the laurel, but it was an impossibility and we gave it up. Our guide now acknowledged that he was lost. There was only one thing to do and that was to turn back until we could get into the open timber again. We took a mountain stream which diverged a little from the course we came, and followed it down. It was hemmed in on both sides by the laurel thicket, so we had to keep the bed of the stream, part of the time jumping from boulder to boulder, sometimes finding a strip of shingle on one side, then crossing to the other. The stream was full of ice and the rocks were slippery. All this day we kept this retrograde course, and when night came we had to make our camp in the thicket. It was with difficulty that we could get any wood that would burn, or even find a smooth place big enough to lie down upon. We had had practically nothing to eat the day before or this day, and you can imagine it was a blue camp. The next morning we pulled in our belts a little tighter, and started again. About noon we got out of the thicket, and ascended a ridge, which gave us an outlook over the country. We also struck a well marked trail leading in the direction we wished to go. Far away down in the valley, some six or eight miles distant, we saw a solitary house. A halt was called for consultation. Many of the party were showing signs of weakness, and we had been obliged to make frequent stops to allow those in the rear to close up. The question was put in this way. We have here a good trail leading in the right direction. Shall we follow it? We have been already three days without food. The guide acknowledges that he is lost and has no idea how long we will have to travel before we can reach a settlement. With another day of this hard traveling, some of the party are going to give out and perish in the wilderness, and perhaps all will.

On the other hand, if we go down to this house we see, the chances are even that we will find it occupied by a Union man. And even if he is a rebel, he could not capture such a party as this, each one armed with a good hickory stick. It seemed wiser to the majority to go for food, and all so decided except young Loftis and two others, who said they would starve in the woods rather than take one step backward. They went on and and before night they found help, and soon were safe in Knoxville. We turned back.

Up to this last day I had endured the hard marching over the mountains as well as the average of the company. Although not always able to keep up with the head of the column, I was, by no means, in the rear. But I had the misfortune to get seriously lamed the previous day in our march down the bed of the stream. The constant pounding, caused by jumping from rock to rock with wet boots, developed a large blood blister the full size of one of my heels. I did not feel it so very much at the time, but the following day I found it hard to keep up, as I was obliged to walk altogether on the toes of the disabled foot. When we decided to go down the valley to the house we saw in the distance, I told them not to wait for me, as I could not well miss the way, and I would take my own time.

They were soon out of sight, and I hobbled my way slowly and painfully down the valley alone. When I was still some distance from the house I was looking for, I heard one or two rifle shots ahead. Although entirely in the dark as to what they might signify, there was nothing for me to do but push on as well as I could. When at last I reached the little clearing, and the house I had seen, I found, to my disappointment that it was not a dwelling-house, but a little mill. It was a rude structure built of logs, with a small overshot wheel, which furnished power to turn the primitive stones. In the bottom of the hopper were a few handfuls of corn, a remnant of the last grist. These I carefully secured and put into my haversack. There was no sign of the rest of our party. I supposed they had pushed on still farther down the valley to find an inhabited house.

But I was pretty thoroughly played out by this time, and it was nearly night and I felt unable to go any farther. In looking over the building I found that the attic was filled with corn fodder, but the only opening into it was a small window in the gable. I thought that if I could get in among that fodder I would have a comfortable bed for the night, and with the raw corn for my supper, I could wait till morning before going any farther. I had no great difficulty in climbing up to the window ; but when I had pushed aside the wooden shutter, I found the space packed closely with the fodder. With considerable difficulty, I proceeded to bore my way into it, and had got my body in, when I was startled by a voice below saying, "Here, you Yank, come down out of that or I'll shoot." You may be sure I pulled my head out of that hole as quickly as possible, at the same time assuring the speaker that there was not the slightest necessity for him to proceed to such extreme measures.

On reaching the ground I found myself in the presence of a boy not more than fourteen or fifteen years old, but he had a rifle as long as he was, and evidently knew how to use it. In answer to my inquiries as to the rest of our party, this young Ananias told me that he belonged to a good Union family, and that my companions had already started over the mountains to Tennessee, and that he had been sent back to hunt me up. I felt rather indignant that my friends had left me in that way, but accompanied my guide to his home. Here I found his mother and several young children. She had evidently received a hint from her hopeful son, and did not undeceive me as to the true situation. But she gave me something to eat, of which all I remember is that there was a quantity of boiled cabbage, which was not more than half cooked.

Meanwhile I was making anxious inquiries as to how I could get a guide to take me along the trail till I could overtake the rest of the party. The woman was rather non-committal, although I was ready to pay lavishly for the necessary assistance. Ananias took a fancy to my pipe, which was a fairly good one, that I had brought with me into the Confederacy, and

coolly asked for it. I demurred, on the ground that I had no other. His ready solution of that difficulty was, "Wall, you can chew." As that was not the way in which I preferred to take my tobacco, I objected. Then he hunted up an old clay bowl with a reed stem and proposed to swap. As I supposed I would soon be where I could get all the pipes I wanted, I very readily acceded to this proposal.

Sometime about the middle of the evening I was startled by the entrance of two men, who had guns with them, though this last circumstance was not necessarily alarming, for it seemed to be the custom for the men always to take a gun with them when they went out. After the usual salutations I found an opportunity to get a word in private with the woman to find out whether they were men I could trust. She assured me that they were friends. With a great sense of relief I returned to the fire, where they were seated, and laughingly acknowledged that they had given me a start, at the same time expressing my satisfaction that I was in good hands, and at once began discussing the possibilities of my getting help to cross the mountains to rejoin my companions. I seemed to do most of the talking, and they did not appear very ready to enter into my plans. After things had gone on in this way for some time, one of the men said, "It is of no use to keep this up any longer. You are entirely mistaken. Your party have not gone to Tennessee. They were captured this afternoon and have been taken down to Qualla under guard." My disappointment was bitter, but there was no help for it, and I was obliged to accept the situation with as much philosophy as I could muster. What to do with me was the next question. It was getting late and they could see for themselves that I was in no condition to march to Qualla. They said that if I would be "reasonable" they would take me to one of their houses, which was not far away, for the night, and would get a horse for me to ride the next day. They were very kind in word and in deed.

After arriving at this man's house, I sat for sometime by the fire discussing the questions of the war with my guards. I well

remember the surprise they showed at my perfect confidence that the North would win in the great struggle. They were astonished beyond measure when I described the business activity and the prosperity of the North, and contrasted it with the condition in the southern states. And as to men, I told them that while they had already put almost every available man into the ranks, if they should go North, they might go from one end of the country to the other and they would not miss the men we had sent into our army. And I told them we were determined to win, no matter how long it took, or how many men it required. They were very much interested in the information I was able to give them. Living as they did in their secluded mountain valleys, they knew nothing of the true situation, but believed implicitly the lies which the rebel authorities so systematically published for the misinformation of their people.

In the room where we were was a typical country bed. I do not know what the foundation was, but the superstructure was a feather bed, quite two feet thick. When bedtime came, the good woman of the house, pitying my forlorn condition, and at the same time feeling a little anxiety about her spare bed, made some hesitating remarks about soldiers sometimes carrying about with them more than was to be seen, but offered to let me occupy it if I was guiltless in this respect. In my answer which was rather evasive, I am afraid I prevaricated a little to say the least. But then, think of the temptation! For nearly six months the process of undressing for bed had been at the most taking off my hat and boots. Now, worn and footsore, the thought of undressing like a Christian, and getting between clean sheets, and sinking down into that delicious softness, was more than human flesh could resist. If sin always brought its punishment as promptly as mine did, there would be less transgression in the world. The first sensation was all I had imagined, but it was too strange. Then I grew hot, my unseen companions warmed up to their work, and I rolled and tossed and scratched for hours, but sleep would not come, and when it did it was troubled and broken, and, taken altogether, it was

about as uncomfortable a night as I remember. Probably if I had stretched myself out on the floor with my feet to the fire, and my boots for a pillow, I would have slept like a log till daylight.

The next morning my kind-hearted guard obtained for me a horse and took me down to Qualla, where I found the rest of our company, and two or three other officers who had been captured at some point farther west. I here learned the particulars of the recapture. As we were crossing, in single file, an exposed ridge, we were seen and counted by some Indians who were hunting in the mountains. We were now in a rebel section, and they had been warned that escaped prisoners were trying to work their way through the mountains into Tennessee and were on the lookout for us. The Indians went down to a settlement and gave the alarm, and a party of sixteen armed men came out and easily captured the whole party, and marched them to Qualla that afternoon. Our guard-house was a rude log structure with no floor, and I think, the fire was built on the ground in the center, the smoke finding its way out of a hole in the roof. Our guards were Indians. They belonged to a remnant of the old Cherokee tribe, still living among the mountains in the northwest corner of North Carolina. They are partially civilized, and make a living by hunting and cultivating small farms in the mountain valleys. Many of them could neither speak nor understand English, and the officer in command had to address them in their own language. The Indian characteristics of feature and color were well marked. There were many of them in the rebel service, and they were armed and uniformed, the same as any soldiers. I do not know what use was made of them, but probably they only acted as scouts and guards in the section of country where they lived.

When our party was captured the day before, there was much anxiety in regard to Semple, our guide, for he was a deserter from the rebel army. As soon as there was an opportunity, some of the other men exchanged clothing with him, and he was given the name of an officer from Ohio, who had escaped

from Columbia, and had succeeded in getting through to our lines. We hoped in this way to get him back to prison with us. One afternoon, as it was beginning to grow dark, he thought he saw a chance to escape, and made a break for the woods, which were quite near. He was seen and I think a shot was fired, which missed him. But one of the Indians started on his track at once, and before long we heard a regular Indian war-whoop. The other Indians understood this and explained: "He got him," and so it proved.

While we were here, we found that, poor as we thought ourselves, we still had some superfluous articles which had a market value. Brass buttons found a ready sale. Coats and vests could be fastened together by pinning with thorns, not ornamental, to be sure, but they answered the purpose, and the buttons were soon exchanged for something to eat. Then we found that leather was an exceedingly dear commodity in the Confederacy. What need was there for us to have such long legs to our boots? We certainly would not ride horseback much in the immediate future. Shoes would protect the feet just as well and would be lighter to carry, so we converted our boots into shoes by cutting off the legs at the ankles, slitting down the insteps and boring holes for shoestrings, and the legs followed the buttons. I think I received ten dollars for my pair of boot-legs. It was Confederate money of course, and I do not remember the rate of exchange at that time, so cannot calculate how many, or how few cents in gold that sum represented. But food was relatively cheap, and we made a substantial addition to our supplies by the transfer.

We remained in Qualla two or three days while arrangements were being made to take us back to prison. We found to our great disappointment, that we were not going back to Columbia, but were to be sent to Danville, Va. This was a great misfortune to us, for we had left in Columbia blankets and cooking utensils, and many little things, that were of much importance to us. We were to march first to Asheville, and from there to Morganton, where we were to take the cars to Danville. When

the morning came for us to begin our march, we were drawn up in line, and an equal number of Indians was drawn up in the rear of us. Each Indian was then given to understand that the man in front of him was in his special charge till we were delivered up to the authorities in Asheville. During the whole march each had his Indian following him like a shadow. Within reasonable limits, every man marched as he pleased. He could stop at the houses we passed for a few moments, for a drink of water, or to have a word with the people. But wherever he went he could be sure that his faithful Indian was close to his heels. This arrangement made the marching much easier than it would have been if we had been obliged to go in a compact body with the guards on our flanks.

My foot was still so bad that the rebel officer admitted that it would be useless for me to attempt to walk, and he provided an old white horse for me to ride. There was no saddle, his backbone was very prominent, and, in spite of the blankets we put on him, the riding was anything but a luxury. I do not know how many days we were making the march to Asheville. I only remember two sleeping-places. The first night we slept in a schoolhouse, and one night we spent in the jail at Webster. Sometime in the afternoon, before we reached Webster, two of the officers, accompanied by their Indians of course, stepped into a house for water. The man of the house very cautiously made it known that he wanted to get a word with them privately. As soon as they understood his mysterious signs, they told him that if he wanted to say anything he could speak out, for neither of the Indians could understand a word of English. When he was sure that this was the case, he asked them if they had heard the news about Sherman. They said that they only knew what the rebels had told us, and that was that they had Sherman just where they wanted him; that he had gone so far into their country that he could not get out, and that they had him surrounded and would capture his whole army. With a great deal of excitement, and very hurriedly, he said that was all a pack of d——d lies; that Sherman had licked Hood and

taken Atlanta ; that he had blown up the city, and was then on his way to the coast, smashing the railroads and everything else on his way. Our men quickly joined the column, and the good news was cautiously whispered from one to another till all were in possession of the cheering intelligence.

At the close of this day's march, we spent the night, as I have said, in the jail at Webster. This was a two-storied structure, built of logs, I think, and we were quartered in a small room in the second story. On one side was a large fireplace, in which a blazing fire was kept up all night. When we lay down for the night the floor was almost completely covered so scant was the space. Two Indians were left in the room as a guard, who took their position on either side of the fireplace. Soon every man but me was sound asleep and the chorus of snores was appalling. Either on account of this, or from some other cause, I could not sleep, and as the hours passed by I noticed that our guards were yielding to their weariness. At first they sat on their stools with their guns between their knees, nodding lower and lower, till they were ready to tumble into the floor. In spite of all their efforts to brace up and keep awake, they found it impossible. At length yielding to the inevitable, they stood their guns in the corner, and sitting on the floor, with their backs to the wall, settled down in a more comfortable position, and soon they too joined the chorus. As I watched all this through half-closed eyes, I thought of our Union friend, who told us the news of Sherman, whose house was not many miles back on the road, and wished I was with him. I wondered whether it would be possible to get out of the room without waking the guard, and the more I thought about it, the stronger was my inclination to try. I must have known that the door of the room was not locked or I would not have thought of making the attempt. I was lying near the middle of the room, and the door was opposite the fireplace. Cautiously I arose with my shoes in my hands and my eyes on the Indians. The light was dim, as the fire was low by this time. Step by step I made my way over the prostrate forms between me and the door, fearful

lest an accidental touch might rouse some sleeper. But no one stirred and I reached the door safely. The door swung outward. Noiselessly I raised the latch and inch by inch it opened. I was already congratulating myself on my success when I found there was some obstruction ; as I applied a little more pressure to it I was startled by an "ugh," and to my disgust found another Indian had made his bed across the door on the outside. To conceal my intention, I made signs that I wanted to go into the yard for a few minutes, which he allowed me to do, with him for company. That was my last attempt to escape.

When we reached Asheville our guide, Semple, was very anxious lest he might be recognized, as he was well known in the place. As we went into the town he kept his hat well down over his face, and some of the other men crowded as close about him as they could. But all to no purpose, for in spite of the disguise of a Yankee uniform, he was detected, and when the rest of us were turned into the jail yard, he was taken elsewhere. We heard afterward that the poor fellow was shot.

Our Indian guard left us at Asheville. The officer in command of them was a good fellow, and he showed us a great deal of kindness while on the march, and was always jolly and social.

I think we were in Asheville jail two days. Then we marched to Morganton, the nearest point on the railroad. We had now as guard, a part of a light artillery company, which was then serving as infantry. In talking with one of the sergeants of our past experiences I learned that his battery and the 5th Maine Battery had exchanged compliments across the Rappahannock in August, 1862. It was the first time that we were in action, and it was also their first experience. The distance from Asheville to Morganton is about sixty miles, which we marched in three days. I remember very little about this part of the way or of the stopping-place.

We spent one night in Morganton, and were then forwarded by rail to Danville, Va., which place we reached, I think,

December 10, although I am not sure about the date. According to an itinerary kept by Major Mattocks in his diary, the whole distance we marched from the time we left Columbia till we arrived in Morganton was four hundred and thirteen miles.

And so ended our long tramp. We did not secure the freedom we hoped for when we left Columbia, and we suffered many hardships from cold, hunger and weariness, but we never regretted having made the attempt.



REMINISCENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR FROM A SURGEON'S POINT OF VIEW

By Major and Surgeon S. C. GORDON.

THE beginning of the war found the nation ill-prepared for carrying on such a long and desperate struggle as it proved to be. Few men fully, or even approximately, appreciated the magnitude of the undertaking. When the prime minister of the administration announced that sixty days would surely end it, he little realized how much in earnest were the men who inaugurated the Rebellion, or at how much disadvantage the aggressive army was in comparison with the army of defense, working on their own soil with a full knowledge of the country.

Few men in our regular army had been trained or disciplined by practical war experiences, so that from commander-in-chief to the newest recruit, with few exceptions, they had only the theory of war. Theoretical warfare, like theoretical law, medicine or science in any form, is quite another thing from the practical application. Among all the men who distinguished themselves during the long struggle, only McLellan and Sherman seemed at all to comprehend the magnitude of the conflict in which the country was involved. It was my pleasure, a few years after the war had ended, to spend a night with General Hunt, who was chief of artillery for McLellan during the campaign of 1862, and afterward in the same capacity with Grant in 1864. He gave me a full and detailed account of each campaign from the time he reported for duty to General McLellan. He said in substance that he went to McLellan with a prejudice against him, believing him to be only a theoretical soldier, but the first night he spent with him dispelled that illusion. Everything was in a state of chaos, from the first Bull Run, and out of the raw, half-disciplined, thoroughly demoralized troops

already in the field, with the thousands of new recruits, McLellan was expected, at once, to organize an army, arm and equip them, move upon Richmond, capture the capital of the Confederacy, thus ending the war; all this against the flower of the army, one hundred and fifty thousand strong, acting on the defensive.

On our side we had neither artillery, cavalry nor infantry that was organized or equipped. He said that General McLellan told him that before the spring of 1862 there must be an artillery force with five hundred pieces and a corresponding infantry and cavalry force fully ready for service. General Hunt replied, "General McLellan, you are crazy. Such a thing is simply impossible. Where are the guns, the ammunition, the horses and the harness coming from in that time, to put an army like that you describe into actual service? It will require a year at least, and the people of this country will not be content to wait."

"Then it was," continued General Hunt, "that the genius and sagacity and practical virtues of McLellan became apparent. He told me just where everything could be had, guns and ammunition here, horses and harness there, and quartermaster and commissary stores in abundance from various points of the country. McLellan, although an engineer, knew more of my own branch of the service (artillery) than I did myself after fourteen years of practical work. This was not only in my department, but he seemed equally familiar with every other. My first twenty-four hours convinced me that my former estimate of him was all wrong. During the winter which followed, when the stay-at-homes were crying, 'On to Richmond,' I knew well that the army could not move, and that McLellan comprehended how gigantic was to be the task of capturing the stronghold of the Confederacy.

"Even after the plan of campaign was complete and orders were given to move, McDowell's Corps and Berdan's Division were withdrawn from McLellan, against his strongest protest. His letter to the War Department and the President at that

time shows emphatically how important he considered this movement and how much depended upon having an army that should be able successfully to meet and conquer Lee's better disciplined and more numerous forces. His remonstrances and appeals were alike in vain," said General Hunt, "and we moved against this army of Lee's with less than one hundred thousand men 'fit for duty.' The seven days of hard fighting, with the unequal force well entrenched, resulted in the retreat to White House Landing, and McLellan was ordered to report to Washington." General Hunt characterized the retreat as one of the most masterly and successful in history.

Two years after, General Hunt was ordered to report to Grant and was with him through the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, etc., losing a hundred thousand men to attain a point at which McLellan had not lost a man. "We then went into the battle of Cold Harbor to show that McLellan ought to have taken Richmond, and got a d——d licking in three hours. Now," added the general, "if after the battle of Cold Harbor Grant had been ordered to Washington, as was McLellan after the siege before Richmond, which would have been the greater failure of the war, McLellan or Grant?"

Much of the details of our night's conversation is necessarily omitted, but I have given you the substance and mostly in the general's own words. Here was a man who certainly had an opportunity to know whereof he spoke, and it gives us the estimate placed by him upon one of the leaders mentioned.

The other, General Sherman, who has just laid aside the mortal mantle and now "sleeps his last sleep," having "fought his last battle," has left abundant evidence of his keen appreciation of the terrible conflict that must ensue before the end of the war could come. His official papers, published in his "Memoirs," show conclusively that nothing but prolonged hard fighting by disciplined troops could preserve the Union. His first interview with the President and the Secretary of War, after assuming command, was characteristic and prophetic. Learning that seventy-five thousand three months' troops had been called for

he exclaimed, "You might as well undertake to extinguish the flames of a burning building with a squirt gun as to put down this rebellion with three months' troops. We ought to organize at once for a gigantic war, call out all the military power of the country and with it strangle the rebellion in its birth."

He then laid his views before the President and War Secretary and endeavored to impress upon them the importance of adopting a vigorous war policy. All his efforts were in vain and he failed to convince them that the affair would be anything more than a temporary storm. Afterward, as the aspect became more serious, he developed his plan of dividing the Confederacy by marching his army from the Ohio River to the gulf or to the sea, as he afterward did. This plan was received with still less favor. By this time he was considered crazy and serious talk was made that he should be relieved of all command, if not sent to an insane asylum.

The counsels of political generals and radical newspapers seemed to command the attention of the War Department, or Administration, or both, and the "On to Richmond" cry for a time was hushed by the first Bull Run.

With this general feeling, that armed with pop-guns and headed by a brass band the three months' troops could march "unvexed" to the capital of the Confederacy, it was no wonder that thousands of our best young men should enroll themselves in the battalions. Many believed that no fighting at all would take place and that it would be a good holiday excursion.

The Bull Run disaster put a new phase on the matter. Affairs began to look more serious and enlisting was more a patriotic sentiment than before. Three years' men, enlisted during the last half of 1861, looked the issue squarely in the face. It was business with them,—no illusions of military "pomp and circumstance of war," no large bounties of money,—nothing but the desire to preserve intact the union of the states.

Regardless of party affiliations or former predictions as to the results of the triumph of party policy, each man determined that the country was in danger, and, like the parent who found his

child in danger, even from disobedience of orders, he was willing to put forth every energy to save.

To a comparatively few men, however, were the stern realities of war apparent until they came to actual camp and field life. The great change from the comforts and regularity of home, however humble, tried the strongest constitutions, and disease and death began their ravages early in the history of every regiment.

Medical officers, as a rule, were better fitted in their branch of the service than were most other volunteers. We at least had some experience to back us in the same line that we were called upon to serve in camp. Even a layman would be willing to admit, if not claim, that we had killed our man. The chief of the medical department was rather unfortunate quite early in the war, in being suspected of having an itching palm and being desirous of dividing the profits with the purveyors. How much truth was at the bottom of this? Well! it is impossible to say, for years after he received an honorable acquittal. The system that obtained later in the struggle was strikingly lacking at the first. By persevering in making requisitions we succeeded in getting the ordinary medical supplies, but "hospital stores" were very grudgingly doled out so that we scarcely ever received enough on a month's requisition to supply the moderate demands of the field and staff, to say nothing of the sick. Later on the thing was much better managed, when we were able to draw a barrel at a time and of a better quality than commissaries ordinarily furnish. With Colonel Neal Dow as a noble example, of course the 13th Regiment was a model of sobriety and temperance, and the medical officers were careful in the use of stimulants, making the heroic self-sacrifice of even taking this kind of medicine themselves rather than compel the poor privates to swallow such nauseous doses.

The first troublesome illness my regiment experienced was what almost every one in the army alike suffered from, viz., measles. It is surprising to find as we did how many adults there are in the community who have never had this disease.

One hundred and twenty-five cases in my own regiment ; and *such* measles ! the like was never known ! Why, some of those cases have lasted until now and the sufferer bears the trouble, as best he can, by the government paying him a thousand or two dollars as back pay and twelve dollars a month the remainder of his life. Army measles like army itch never gets well.

This same disease served me a good turn on our way South. It happened in this way. Many of the men had congestion of the lungs and pneumonia following measles, as often happens. So that when we left the state on the eighteenth of February, 1862, with thermometer at zero and three feet of snow on the ground, it was serious business for the poor fellows. We took the new steamer Mississippi at Boston, having on board four companies of my regiment and the entire 31st Massachusetts, Colonel Gooding. We were to proceed to Fortress Monroe, take on board General Butler and staff who was to command the Nineteenth Corps in the Department of the Gulf. Colonel Dow being the senior colonel took command of the troops, and having an eye to the creature comforts at sea, as well as on shore, occupied the best stateroom on board, and the one that had been assigned to General Butler. I suppose he fully intended vacating it before the general came on board, but through some mistake he had not removed his *penates* and Butler came and found them scattered about in the stateroom and everything in confusion. In a rage he said, "Orderly, tell Colonel Dow to report to me." The colonel was not a graceful figure as a military man in those days, but he came tiptoeing along and with a salute said, "General Butler, I have the honor to report." But he was not allowed to make any further report, for Butler, in that peculiar, savage tone for which he was so noted, cut him short with, "I understand you have been occupying my stateroom from Boston. Get your things out of there d——d quick and then apologize." Chaplain Moore and myself were standing near and hearing the colloquy the poor chaplain was nearly scared out of his wits. Turning to me, he said, "Doctor, he is a awful man."

A few days afterward we encountered a furious gale off Hatteras and were nearly shipwrecked. The hatches were closed for twenty-four hours and the fifteen hundred men nearly perished from suffocation. Two days after, on a bright, calm, sunny morning, we went hard aground on Frying Pan Shoals, struck an anchor thrown to leeward and stove a hole in the forward compartment, which instantly filled with water. Every soldier's blanket was taken to stop the leak, until a gunboat came to our relief by taking off a portion of the troops and pulling us off when the tide served. While we were sending off these troops the chaplain attempted to get into one of the boats and was stopped by General Butler with, "Here, you long-haired chaplain, come back ; if we are going down we want you to pray for us." He remained for a little while but the general relented and allowed him to go off to the gunboat, from which he sent his resignation, and with Colonel Dow's endorsement of approval General Butler accepted it and he never returned to the regiment. We were out of chaplains for several months afterward. Finally we made one from the ranks—a Baptist minister, who enlisted from pure patriotism, I think. He became a very useful man in many ways, acting as nurse, postmaster, and a good all-round man. I am very sure that he was a more than average good chaplain, although I am free to confess that the strictly religious services were not often very largely attended by the members of the regiment. My observation of other regiments led me to believe that as a rule the chaplain who "went about doing good" in a practical way, served the Lord and his country best. The religious sentiment was somewhat in abeyance with the average soldier during the stirring times of war. I am sorry to say that in not a few instances the chaplain himself lacked in "saving grace" to an extent that led us to think that with these officers salary was out of proportion to their services—that it was good pay and "poor preach." But everything else in those days was only relative and not absolute.

Why we ran on to Frying Pan Shoals in broad daylight, with bright sunlight and a calm sea, no one knew and probably never

will. The captain was accused of being a rebel and trying to put us where we would be captured. He was promptly arrested by General Butler, put in close confinement, and afterwards tried by court martial, but I think he was finally released, the charges "not being proven."

We went to Hilton Head with eighteen feet of water in the forward compartment, and landed there the evening of March 2, 1862, just at sundown, having lost one man from diphtheria. This was the beginning of a most terrible scourge which prevailed in all the Maine regiments on Ship Island for the next three months.

As soon as we dropped anchor in the bay, the order went round to disembark and bivouac on the sand that night. It would have taken until midnight and then the men would have been obliged to sleep on the beach without blankets or tents, for nearly everything of that kind had been used in trying to stop the leak. The men were feeble and exhausted from hard work, confinement below the hatches and badly cooked rations, which were eaten from hand to mouth. I was the senior medical officer on the ship (the surgeon of the Massachusetts regiment dying from brain fever), and I determined that if the men went ashore it should be against the strongest protest I could make, and so informed Colonel Dow. "Why," said he, "if you dare to protest General Butler will place you under arrest." "Nevertheless," I replied, "I shall try it." So marching along to the stern where the general was, I saluted and said, "I understand that an order has been issued for the troops to land and sleep on the beach." "Yes, sir; and what have you to say about it?" "Simply, sir, that I protest against it as a very dangerous thing to do. These men have just come from an extremely cold climate. Many of them are now convalescing from measles and the sequences, and a large number will be rendered ill and doubtless die in consequence. They have neither blankets nor shelter, and after the labor of getting ashore, they will be in bad condition for lying down on the sand by the water's edge."

By this time the general was white with rage. "Well, sir;" said he, "any man who cannot sleep out there without getting

sick, the quicker we get rid of him the better. I can do it myself with only the clothes I have on now." I remarked quietly, "I do not understand that it was for this purpose that these men enlisted. It is my duty to prevent them from getting ill and dying, if possible. Besides, General Butler, I do not think you could do it with safety, although you have not suffered the exposure that the soldiers have." Cooling a little the general continued, "My experience in army life so far has shown that whenever any movement is ordered there is always some one to protest. The quartermaster will swear there are not any means of transportation ; the commissary that the stores are not ready; the ordnance officer that we have no ammunition; and now comes the surgeon, who swears the men are not in condition." "I have done what I think is my duty in protesting against this order," I added, and touched my hat in salute. Within half an hour the order was countermanded.

I had occasion to meet General Butler many times afterward and always found him reasonable and courteous. He was a strict disciplinarian to be sure, but was not so black as painted. His general and special orders in the Department of the Gulf were models of terseness and logic, quaint and unique as literary curiosities. His designation of the negro as "contraband" expressed the true condition of things, and had the administration and all the departments acted upon the idea expressed in the word, it would have solved the negro question during the war much more simply than did the course pursued. "Contraband of war" meant that they were to be used for any purpose that would aid us. Had we adopted the policy of using the negroes in the climate, for all fatigue duty we could have saved thousands of our New England boys who died from the effects of it. Wherever we took possession of any new section of country thousands of negroes flocked to our camps to eat our rations and give us trouble in many ways. "Ladies fever" broke out and ran its course, leaving as a result strictures and bladder troubles from which many a poor fellow suffers to this day, with the only consolation that he can have a pension. Well, it was "acquired in service" and why shouldn't he be

remembered by the government? A case like that is good enough for the ordinary pension agent, especially as the applicant may not know or remember just how it was caused and the examiner is required only to state what he finds and the rate for it.

To return to the negro once more. I find on consulting some old letters which I wrote home at that time, 1862, that I had some very positive convictions on that very point. In substance I said : I wish the politicians at Washington would let the soldiers manage the negro question. We would simply put them to hard labor as fast as we get them, make them build breast-works, drive teams, load and unload vessels, in fact, be the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and let the soldiers do the fighting. The politicians, who would not have the war end until slavery is abolished and are continually besieging Mr. Lincoln to issue an emancipation proclamation, ought to be sent to Fort Warren or out of the country with the other side in politics. Such a proclamation has no effect beyond the lines of our pickets and such talk simply provokes political rancor and through it enlisting is hindered and the army suffers. The time for theoretical politics has passed and the old questions should be buried until we know whether we have any country or not. I hope Mr. Lincoln will still adhere to the saying attributed to him, that an emancipation proclamation would be "like the Pope's bull against a comet." Send us the abolitionists and the violent copperheads and we will put them in the front rank and give them the first fire. The end of the war is sure to end slavery, not by proclamation, but by a general disintegration of the old order of things. The details can be settled after the fighting is over ; now all we want is plenty of men and ammunition.

But the proclamation came January 1, 1863, having been threatened in August before, unless the rebels in the meantime should surrender. The war lasted two and one-half years after and then ended by strong, hard blows given by Sherman and Grant, the latter of whom had unlimited and unrestricted power over the entire military force of the country. There was no

common sense in any other method of warfare. The part played by negroes aided us but little in comparison to what it should, I think.

But this diversion has left my regiment on Hilton Head where we remained a week. The steamer was repaired, but our troops separated, my own going on the steamer Matanzas to Ship Island, where we found the Nineteenth Corps gathering. This was a desolate sand island covered at its northern end by a few straggling pines, which the soldiers cut and floated down for firewood. This was hard work, for it involved exposure to water as well as bearing heavy burdens. Here began the first real disease of the Department of the Gulf, viz., homesickness, nostalgia. Many a poor fellow suffered to an extent scarcely to be believed. Several were discharged from my own regiment for this alone, for this was a well recognized disease in the government table. A severe case was indeed pitiful in the extreme. Soon, however, came a most direful scourge, which almost decimated the four Maine regiments, at that time on the island. Diphtheria began in my regiment, as I before said, on the passage out. We buried the first man at Hilton Head, and the second in the Gulf of Mexico. By the time we landed many others had the germ implanted and it soon spread to the 12th, 14th and 15th Regiments. I do not exaggerate when I say that not less than a thousand cases occurred in these four regiments. Our hospital accommodations and medical supplies were extremely limited, for the Sanitary and Christian Commissions had not yet commenced their noble work.

The type of the disease was malignant and the men died like victims of the plague. What remedies we had seemed of no avail, for many were deathstruck from the first symptoms. In my own regiment we buried sixteen in the month of June, 1862, from this disease alone and what was remarkable about it, it seemed to select the finest, most able-bodied men. In one day five died. Other Maine regiments suffered equally with ours. The dead march could be heard at almost any hour of day or night. That mournful roll of the drum with fife accompaniment

became so dismal and doleful, adding to the deadly homesickness the fear of death, that the men became so demoralized, that a general order forbade any music at a funeral. It was estimated that nearly five hundred men either died or were disabled to a great degree, in the four Maine regiments, from diphtheria alone. The struggle to health again was long and difficult and when these convalescents afterwards went to Forts Jackson and St. Philip and the swamps of Louisiana, fever and ague found them easy victims. From the time the bombardment by Porter's mortar fleet began, until Farragut's bold passage of the forts, we could hear, at Ship Island, every explosion and when the firing ceased we were in most intense suspense until the result was known.

The news of the surrender and the simultaneous occupation of the city of New Orleans changed the whole aspect of things. No amount of medication could equal the tonic effect of this victory. The terrible demoralization was over and nostalgia was practically eliminated from our list of causes for discharge. Surgeon's call was more a pastime than at any time before or after in the history of the regiment. It was no uncommon thing before that to have two hundred appear in a single morning and the difficulty of sorting out the bummers and sending them to "duty," or selecting the real sick men, taxed the diagnostic powers of the brightest surgeons to the utmost capacity. One had to learn to think quick in order to do anything like equal justice.

It was a rare school for the study of the physiognomy of disease, and he who was most apt in this direction made the least enemies, both among the soldiers and officers. These latter were oftentimes more difficult to deal with than the soldier himself. When large details for fatigue and guard were made each captain was anxious to report as many "fit for duty" as possible, and if the surgeon excused none that the captain thought ought to be, oftentimes a complaint would go up to headquarters and the colonel would call a council consisting of surgeon and captain. At one time when we were suffering

terribly from fever and ague, diarrhea, etc., these complaints came so thick and fast from the line, that Colonel Rust was made to believe that there was really some foundation for the complaint and questioned me very closely in regard to it. Our interview became rather animated, I defending myself as best I could, until finally the colonel said, somewhat hastily, "I admit, Doctor, that you have command of the sick, but I want you to remember that I command the regiment, sir." "Suppose, Colonel," I said, "that I put them all on the sick list, who will command them?" He appreciated the joke and adjourned the council. This was the only interruption to our otherwise extremely pleasant and friendly relations, for many years, both during and after the war. I had the pleasure of ministering to his sufferings in his last days within our own city by the sea. A more conscientious or braver soldier or truer friend never lived than Harry Rust.

The death list from disease was a fearful one in the Department of the Gulf. Fever and ague and diarrhea, the former disabling and the latter killing, were worse foes than bullets, ten to one. It was estimated that at least ten thousand soldiers died and were buried in the Department of the Gulf, from disease of the bowels alone, from 1862 until the end of the war. It was a standing joke in our department that to be a good soldier here bowels are of more consequence than brains.

The slang phrase in regard to the soldier who was discharged, was "He hasn't got the guts to stand it." The marches were long, the water poor (except on the banks of the Mississippi), the weather torrid, and the rations oftentimes of poor quality, owing to the long distance from base of supplies. Fatigue duty under such circumstances, to Northern men especially, was deadly. The bones of the best young men of New England lie in unknown graves all over Louisiana. That terrible march of the Red River Expedition, in 1864, from Brashear City to Sabine Cross Roads, the fighting there and at Pleasant Hill, and afterward when "we all skedaddled from Grand

Ecore," will never be forgotten by any member of the Nineteenth Corps. There was much, to be sure, that was ludicrous about it, viewed in the light of subsequent events, but few of us hardly saw "where the laugh came in" at the time. It was a long and lonely retreat, fighting by day and by night. To be sure we got some cotton, but it was mostly used to make bonfires and beds for our ambulances and wagons, to transport sick and wounded soldiers on. At Cane River we made operating tables of the bales, all marked C. S. A., which the soldiers interpreted Cotton Stealing Association.

I shall never forget the heroism displayed by one of our Maine companions at this battle of Cane River. The Third Brigade of the Second Division was commanded by General Francis Fessenden, then colonel of the 30th Maine. He was shot on the open field leading his brigade, and it so happened that he was brought to me, where I had established hospital headquarters. As he lay on the ground with only a blanket under him, while I was dressing his leg, he was apparently unmindful of any suffering, but rubbed his hands with delight exclaiming, "Oh, Doctor, you ought to have seen that Third Brigade go in."

When I told him that he was in no immediate danger he said, "Now, Doctor, let me lie here for a while and you attend to those other poor fellows who are groaning around here." What fears he may have ever had were certainly now turned to a satisfaction which beamed from his animated face.

My own observation as well as experience leads me to believe that no man ever faced bullets flying thick and fast, or heard the sounds of "bombs bursting in air," with unqualified feelings of pleasure. I freely confess to being a most arrant coward under these circumstances. I have a strong sympathy with the officer who, when he was taunted with being scared in such a battle, replied, "Yes, I was scared; and if you had been there and had been half as scared, you would have run like the devil." It is the courage that stays through. It is said that most battles are lost by fear, rather than by being outnumbered

and actually whipped. I have seen many a man actually paralyzed by fear, so he could not hold his gun. I remember so well a delicate young fellow at the beginning of this same battle of Cane River, who came to me saying, "Doctor, please tell me what is the matter with my heart. It beats so it seems as if it would come through my chest wall." He was pale and had evidently lost all strength. I took his gun, made a bed with his blanket under a tree, and told him to lie there until he felt better. I think he did not move until the battle was over. He was unlike the real skulker who coolly and deliberately shirks before the action and hides until danger is over. He meant to do his duty but the flesh was too weak.

The responsibility of deciding as to malingerers was thrown upon the medical officers and it was a trying condition many times. We always had a certain number of dead beats and the ingenuity displayed by them would have made them professionals in almost any calling in life. No species of lying was too subtle for them, although it might be difficult to detect the trick. In one company of my regiment were two brothers, Tom and Bob, who were skilled in that direction. On one occasion Bob came to surgeon's call with the usual complaint—diarrhea. I put him on light diet and sent him back sick in quarters. About ten o'clock that morning a message came from Company G, that Bob was very ill and wanted me in a hurry. I found him with a severe colic, which I suspected was due to overeating; but he swore roundly he had taken nothing but bread and coffee. I sent for an emetic and the result was a pint or more of beans, evidently taken for breakfast. Bob's life was made miserable ever after, for a practical joke was fun for the average soldier.

The last two years of the war gave us nearly everything we needed in the way of hospital stores and delicacies for the sick. The two great organizations, the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, with their able and efficient nurses, were a blessing which none but men in our department could properly appreciate. Thousands were saved by this beneficence. I was

detailed by General Franklin, after the Red River campaign, to fit out steamers at Alexandria to convey the sick and wounded to New Orleans. I loaded five steamers with the poor fellows who were more dead than alive, having been more or less neglected on account of our rapid retreat from Grand Ecore. On each steamer was a corps from each of these commissions, and the amount of milk punch distributed by them among the invalids would have put to shame a Maine prohibitionist. The delight and animation expressed upon their faces as they felt its genial influence would have warmed the cold heart of the most rigid ascetic. For all these things we were truly thankful, and the blessings bestowed by the sick and dying upon the heroic men and women, who were so unremitting in their attentions and labors for the benefit of such poor suffering wrecks of humanity, must have risen like grateful incense from the altar. These were among the bright reminiscences of a long and cruel war, during which humanity seemed as the beasts of the fields, to be sacrificed as necessity might demand. Such wars certainly are a disgrace to civilization, a blot upon the fair fame of a republic like ours, but out of the terrible struggle has come a higher and holier patriotism, which we may hope will be enduring.



WITH THE SEVENTH MAINE BATTERY

By Brevet Major WILLIAM B. LAPHAM.

THE Seventh Maine Battery to which I belonged joined the Ninth Army Corps as the corps passed through Washington from Annapolis, toward the last of April, 1864. Our corps crossed the Rapidan River and entered the Wilderness while the battle was furiously raging. On the march the day previous, we had heard the roar of the cannon and the rattle of musketry and knew that the troops that had preceded us were hotly engaged. Light artillery could not be used to advantage in the Wilderness, and our battery was only twice in position. The first was on a knoll near the Old Wilderness Tavern from which we were driven in a very few minutes. The second was when much of the light artillery was moved in rear of the Sixth Corps which was hard pressed in an effort by the enemy to turn our right and capture our supply train. We threw solid shot and shell far into the woods, but we saw no charging column of rebels.

At length the firing ceased, we were ordered to move toward the left, and we concluded that the battle of the Wilderness had come to an end. But how it had ended and whether we were to move in advance or in retreat, we could not tell. We had seen but little fighting. We had seen column after column of infantry move into the woods and straggle out again. We had seen the wounded, oh! such vast numbers, brought to the rear in every degree of disability. But whether Grant had whipped Lee or the reverse, we found no one who could tell us, and I confess that I have not found out to this day. I am inclined to think it a drawn battle. Neither side had accomplished what it hoped or expected, and the crisis which it was thought might be reached here was postponed.

When we moved out of our position I confess that I thought we were retreating, and I could see in my imagination the

Northern papers telling their readers, in tremendous display lines, how Grant had met and repulsed the enemy in the Wilderness and then retreated in good order across the river. I confess that I felt disheartened. I knew that we had lost heavily, but a real victory, even at such fearful expense, would have made me entirely happy. I think I but voice the Army of the Potomac at that time, when I say that we wanted victory at whatever cost. We wanted no more retreating. The Army of the Potomac had learned the strength and prowess of the Army of Northern Virginia. They knew that under the leadership of their great captain, coupled with the advantage of interior lines and earthworks already thrown up and grassed over, they could be overcome only by attrition, by direct contact and with great disparity of loss against the Union Army. Understanding this fully, it was the earnest desire of the Army of the Potomac, or the thinking portion of it, to keep on fighting and end the conflict. The North had abundant resources and could keep her depleted army filled up. The South, on the other hand, had every man at the front, and every loss created a vacancy that could never be filled. This advantage was all that we had to offset the superior position of the enemy, and in General Grant's determination to make use of this advantage to the utmost, I believe he was fully sustained by the rank and file of his army, and who, individually, had greater risks at stake? For the adoption of this policy, General Grant has been called a butcher, and accused of caring little or nothing for the lives of the men under him. His policy has often been compared with the conservative, not to say timid, policy of General McLellan under similar circumstances, but, as I think, greatly to the advantage of the former, for results alone are the criterion by which leaders are judged. It was by these hard blows delivered at every opportunity, by a commander who never refused a battle, that the ranks of the Confederate Army were decimated, and unconditional surrender at length became inevitable. Strategy against such an accomplished soldier as General Lee could effect but little.

Moving out of the Wilderness we stopped to lunch and to rest and feed our horses on the Chancellorsville battleground. I had not even then determined in my own mind whether we were advancing or retreating, but I felt that knowledge on this subject was not far distant. After dinner, instead of following General Hooker's line of retreat, we marched away toward Spotsylvania court-house, and with this fact came the knowledge that if we had not achieved a decisive victory in the Wilderness, we were marching to attack the enemy farther on. Such a feeling of relief as this intelligence brought can hardly be described. Before night our army was skirmishing preliminary to the great fight or series of fights at Spotsylvania.

Our battery had part in this battle and lost both in killed and wounded. It had but little to do at the North Anna River fight, but was in throughout the battle at Cold Harbor, and arrived in front of Petersburg in season to take part in the advance made by the Ninth Corps on the night of the seventeenth of June. We were behind the works in front of Petersburg for many days when it was as much as a man's life was worth to raise his head above the parapet. We had part in the bombardment which took place on the morning of the springing of the famous Burnside mine. We had part in the fight for the possession of the Weldon Railroad, and later on in the fight at Peebles Farm. After this we garrisoned Fort Welch, at the left, where we could see the spires of Petersburg. Our battery was in the works near the Hare house and afterwards at the Taylor house, forty-seven consecutive days. At the former position the guns were within three hundred yards of the enemy's line, and on many occasions opened fire on the works in our front. A letter written home by me from this point relates some incidents which I should not otherwise have recalled. When we advanced our line we came upon an ice-house and bent our line a little in order to hold it. The rebels felt the importance of retaining it, and made a stubborn resistance, but we held it, and it supplied the left of the Ninth Corps and the right of the Fifth, with delicious water for a couple of weeks.

An item in this letter says : " A ball passed through the top of my hat this morning as I was standing a short distance in rear of the breastwork. At first I thought it a narrow escape, but on second thought it occurred to me that I stood six feet in my boots, and that in order to have been hurt I must have been three or four inches taller, an unusual height, and so the margin of escape was quite broad." Another item says, "Private George Howe was sitting upon the ground in rear of our line with his back towards the works and his head leaning a little forward, when a ball passed over his head, splitting his cap from rear to front, without touching his head. This admonishes us that we must hug the breastworks."

The summer campaign was now essentially over, and a disposition of the troops for winter quarters began to be made. The Ninth Corps was ordered to relieve the Second which was holding the works at our right. The Seventh Maine Battery was ordered into Fort Alexander Hays, and moved in accordingly. This work, situated at the left of Fort Davis, was surrounded by woods. None of the enemy's works were in sight, and we congratulated ourselves on having a soft place in which to spend the winter months. We at once began to put up winter quarters for officers and men, and stables in the rear for the horses. But, as was frequently the case in the army life of each of us, we were reckoning without our host. Hardly had we commenced operations toward the construction of winter quarters, when an order came for us to relieve a regular battery attached to the Second Army Corps, and stationed in Fort Sedgwick farther to our right. Here at once ended all our hopes of a quiet winter, for the reputation of Fort "Hell" was well known all along our line. We were ordered to make the change in the night time, and in the quietest manner possible. The entrance to the redoubt was by a long, winding, covert-way, so deep that men and artillery could pass in and out without being seen. And so during a dark night early in December, 1864, we took our pieces into Fort Sedgwick and placed them in position, while the regular battery pulled out and went its way. Our camp

was established some two or three miles in rear of the fort where winter quarters were provided for the horses and such of the men as were not required at the front. Three of the five commissioned officers remained in the rear camp, while two, Lieutenant Daniel Staples and I, remained in charge of the guns.

The previous history of this famous redoubt is briefly this: June the twenty-first, after several days fighting around Petersburg, the capture of the outer defenses and the failure to take their main line, it was determined partially to invest the place by a line of entrenchments directed toward the Lynchburg or Southside Railroad. These entrenchments were to consist of redoubts connected by lines of infantry parapets, with ditches and entanglements of slashing abatis, from which the army could be withdrawn at any time for operations either on the right or left or elsewhere, leaving only a sufficient force to hold the line. The enemy threw up similar works in our front, evidently for a similar purpose, only our redoubts were closed in the rear, while theirs were left open. At this time the left of our line, occupied by the left of the Fifth Army Corps, was at the Jerusalem Plank Road, and at this point Fort Sedgwick was constructed by Colonel William S. Tilton's brigade. Soon after this the Second and Sixth Corps were withdrawn from the works leaving the defenses to be occupied by the Eighteenth (whose left joined the Ninth at the Prince George's Court-house Road), the Ninth whose left joined the Fifth, and the Fifth whose left extended to the Jerusalem Plank Road, as stated. After the failure to capture the Weldon Railroad by the Second and Sixth Corps, these two corps extended our line by forming on the left of the Jerusalem Plank Road, the Second taking position next to the Fifth, with the Sixth Corps on its left, and thrown back so as to face the Weldon Railroad, and distant from it about a mile and a half. While in this position Fort Davis was constructed and situated about half a mile from Fort Sedgwick, to the left. When the Sixth Corps was sent to Washington, our left was again drawn in to the Jerusalem Plank

Road and refused, and the rest of July and a part of August were spent in strengthening the works.

Fort Sedgwick was completed and occupied about the eleventh of July. The fort was somewhat irregular in outline, being erected under the close fire of the enemy. General Tilton has told me since the war that he lost quite a number of men, in killed and wounded, while they were employed in this redoubt. It was projected as a salient toward the Confederate lines, and covered not far from an acre of ground. It was a closed work and had embrasures both at the front and rear. Traverses for the protection of the gunners were erected only against the front parapet. Outside, toward the enemy's line, a deep ditch extended the entire length of the work. The parapets were high and strong and afforded a good protection for the garrison from everything except mortar shells. The armament consisted of the six guns of the Seventh Maine Battery, two being placed in Battery 21, adjoining the fort at the right, one section of the Third New Jersey Battery, and two Cohorn mortar batteries, one at our immediate left and the other at our right. The infantry encamped along our rear consisted of the 48th Pennsylvania, 7th Rhode Island, and one or two other regiments of infantry. Colonel Pleasants of the 48th Pennsylvania Regiment was the ranking officer and in command of the garrison, while I was the ranking officer of the artillery. With the mortar batteries I had nothing to do, an officer skilled in their use having charge of them, while I had charge of the eight light twelve-pieces belonging to the two batteries. In the immediate charge of the section of the Third New Jersey Battery was Second Lieutenant Carl Machewsky, a Prussian by birth and education, and since the war a resident of Berlin.

Our entrenched picket line was about forty yards in front of the ditch, and that of the enemy at some points within twenty yards of ours. The Confederate Redoubt Mahone was at our left front, and distant about five hundred yards. In the rear of this was another large redoubt, and toward our right, still

another. Farther toward our right the enemy had a battery of eight-inch mortars, and long and constant practise had given them the range of our works and also the distance from them. Like ours, the redoubts of the enemy were connected by strong infantry parapets. During August and September the enemy kept up a constant fusillade from his entrenched picket line, but at the time of our removal to Fort Sedgwick and through the winter there was no firing by the pickets during the day, but they would commence at dark and keep it up through the entire night.

It was in this famous redoubt that the Seventh Maine Battery found itself one morning early in December, and here we felt quite sure we should remain through the winter. Our predecessors, thinking perhaps that they would not be required to remain here long, had adopted no means to protect the men from the enemy's mortar batteries, and this became our first care. In a short time by the aid of gabions, sand-bags, timber and earth and by the help of a detail of infantry we had constructed bomb-proofs for the protection of the men along the parapet, and one in the center of the redoubt for the ammunition and officers. These bomb-proofs were often tested during the winter and proved to be indeed bomb-proof. A sixty-four pound mortar shell sometimes buried itself in the covering of these shelters, and exploding, would throw out a ton of earth, more or less, but never penetrated far enough to injure the men. Our orders from the artillery headquarters of the corps were explicit and were carried out to the letter. The utmost vigilance was enjoined, and every suspicious movement on the part of the enemy reported promptly to headquarters. At night officers were not to undress; a light was to be kept burning in the officers' quarters and one at the entrance to the magazine. A sentinel was to remain on duty at the entrance to the officers' quarters, one at the magazine, and one detachment of men constantly at their guns. We were not to open fire with the artillery at any time unless we were first fired upon by the artillery of the enemy, or unless the works should

be attacked, and never to fire at all without being able to give a good and substantial reason therefor in daily reports.

Such was to be our routine duty for the long winter months, and such was our duty with occasional variations, until we broke the enemy's lines in our front, and made our way into Petersburg the second day of the following April. Ordinarily, there was but little variety in our daily routine. The pickets kept up a constant fusillade by night and this was conducive to sleep rather than otherwise. We became so accustomed to this firing and to the singing of the bullets as they passed over our heads, that a cessation would awaken us and bring us to our feet in a moment. For the few incidents outside of our regular routine I must rely mainly upon memory for I kept no journal, which was a great mistake.

I have said that Colonel Pleasants was the senior officer of the garrison, but the artillery received orders direct from corps headquarters. Artillery officers were ever sensitive when infantry officers presumed to order them round, and the officers of the Seventh Maine Battery formed no exception. After we had been a few days in the redoubt, Colonel Pleasants sent for me to report at his quarters, and I immediately obeyed. He said I had been in the works and had the guns in position for nearly two weeks, and had not yet discharged a gun, and he wished to know the reason. I showed him my orders from headquarters and informed him that I thought they presented a good and sufficient reason. He said that he was the senior officer, and felt himself responsible for the safety of the garrison. He thought I ought to exercise my men and get the range of, and distance to, the enemy's works. I told him that I would do so on one condition, and that was that he should give me a written order to that effect. He said he would do so on some future occasion, and dismissed me. I thought he might forget all about it, but on the next day, and about the same hour, he sent me a written order to open fire with the eight guns in the redoubt and in Battery 21 upon the enemy's works. It did not take many minutes to obey the order, and the enemy promptly

responded with his artillery in our front, and his mortar battery on our right. Soon the sixty-four pound mortar shells began to drop into the fort and into the camp of the infantry in our rear. Colonel Pleasants came out and as he passed along in the rear of the guns and between them and the central bomb-proof, a mortar shell was buried in the earth of the bomb-proof and exploding threw up a large quantity of frozen earth, and a piece that would weigh several pounds came down and struck the colonel on the crown of his head. He fell to the ground senseless and some of his men being present carried him to his quarters. He soon recovered consciousness, and the concussion seemed to have changed his wishes for he sent an orderly to inform me that I could stop firing. The result of the cannonading was the death of two infantry men in the rear of the fort, the wounding of several others and the total destruction of the winter quarters of several infantry officers. In my report, I enclosed the order of Colonel Pleasants directing me to open on the enemy's works, and we were annoyed no more during the winter by orders from him of any kind. Colonel Pleasants left the garrison soon after and I never saw him again. He was a good and brave officer, and it was his regiment of colliers that under his direction constructed the famous Burnside mine.

Fort Hell was a locality well known along the army line, and visitors who came to see their friends made it a point not to return until they had seen the Confederate line from this point. The fort had a commanding position, situated on high ground, and from the top of our central bomb-proof the spires of Petersburg could be seen and the main line of the enemy for several miles. These visits were generally made in the forenoon, for the custom of the mortar batteries to shell us every afternoon had become well known. I remember one Sunday morning, after a severe rain which had converted our clay into mud, a party of civilians came into the redoubt and asked permission to view the rebel works from the bomb-proof. Among them was a Pennsylvanian of gigantic proportions and wearing a very tall, stiff hat. I ascended the bomb-proof with them, there

being some twelve or fifteen of the party, and they were much interested in the objects pointed out. But there was one thing I saw which they did not, and that was a sponge staff which quickly appeared and as suddenly disappeared behind the parapet of Fort Mahone, which our boys called Fort Damnation. I felt quite sure that a gun was being charged for our benefit, but I said nothing, and in less than half a minute a wreath of smoke ascended from one of the embrasures in Fort Mahone, there was a report and a rifled shell passed over us apparently but a few feet above our heads and exploded in our rear. The effect upon our visitors was most remarkable, not to say ridiculous. They leaped down the steep sides of the bomb-proof and rolled or tumbled into the deep slush below. The Pennsylvanian lost his balance and came down hat first, burying it to the brim and making of it a shocking bad tile. A second shot was fired and then we could distinctly hear the derisive laughter of our foes in which our boys heartily joined, but our visitors failed to see the point of the joke.

The practical jokes, however, were not always perpetrated by the enemy. One day as I climbed the bomb-proof for observation with the glass, which I was frequently in the habit of doing, I saw a large fatigue party filing out of a forest, each man having a log upon his shoulder. The party numbered at least a hundred and perhaps more. Calling one of the sergeants, I pointed out the party to him and directed him to drop a shell as near to them as he could and not hurt them, while I watched the result. A twelve-pound bomb was thrown over their heads, the fuse timed so as to explode it beyond them, and such a fall in firewood I had never witnessed. Each man threw down his log and ran for cover to the parapet, while our boys who had witnessed the escapade set up a shout which must have reached the ears for which it was intended, for the woods from which the party emerged were less than half a mile away.

Our redoubt was so near the entrenched picket line of the enemy that conversation could easily be carried on between our men and the Johnnies. This was not allowable, but sometimes

the rules were violated and defiant remarks passed backward and forward, and blood-curdling threats of what each side would do to the other in the next campaign were uttered. Deserters frequently came in at this point, who, almost without exception, brought reports that our redoubt was being mined. This added greatly to our anxiety, and we sank deep wells outside the ditch which we carefully watched, noting the depth of water several times every day.

The weather was sometimes very cold and our pickets, warmly clad as they were, suffered severely. In a letter written home by me in January, I stated the following: "I have just been out to take a look at the enemy's picket line which is only a few yards from ours. The poor fellows are hardly half-clad and must suffer severely. They have no overcoats and walk about shivering with a fragment of a blanket over their shoulders. This morning an old man with hair as white as snow came into our lines, and asked for protection against the pitiless storm. He was over seventy years of age; said he was pressed into a service in which he had no sympathy, to fight for a cause in which he had no faith."

In another place: "To-day I saw a little mouse skipping about our quarters and I felt as proud as Diogenes did when he found one in his tub. It really reminds one of civilized life."

And under date of January 26: "We were quite startled Monday evening by a heavy firing away on our right. The night was dark and rainy, and everything along our front was quiet save the usual picket firing, when suddenly came to our ears the roar of heavy guns, and on climbing the works we could see at our right, flash after flash lighting up the inky blackness of the night, but so far away that there was an interval of seventy-two seconds between the flash and the report. The next day we learned that it was caused by an abortive attempt of rebel rams to reach City Point and destroy or capture our supplies." On the following day was added:

"The storm has passed and the morning is delightful. The weather is very fickle; to-day, cold and stormy; the next, cold and windy; and the next, warm and springlike. We have a

large detail of infantry assisting our men in repairing the damage to our works caused by the storm. Taking advantage of the storm and the darkness one hundred and ten deserted and came in from our front last night. They tell the same story of short rations, worn out clothing and great suffering. The rebellion they say is about played out."

One evening while busy in inspecting the works and in other routine duty, I saw an undersized stranger looking over the works and taking notes in a most suspicious manner. He was in citizen's dress, and I at once determined that he would not be allowed to depart in peace, until he had explained his business at the front. I was on the point of questioning him, when our attentive friends of the mortar battery rendered it unnecessary by dropping a shell into the redoubt which exploded quite near him. He made a bee line for the central bomb-proof, and there he remained until the shelling ceased, which continued as usual for several hours. He introduced himself as Thomas Nast, the caricaturist, and said he was out on a prospecting tour, filling his portfolio with sketches of scenes along the army line for the benefit of the readers of *Harper's Weekly*. We found him social and full of anecdote, and we greatly enjoyed his stay with us. A sketch of the redoubt soon after appeared in the columns of the paper upon which he was employed.

One of the red letter days of the winter was the one upon which commissioners came through our lines to meet Secretary Seward and others in Hampton Roads. We obtained the information first from the Confederate pickets, and when it was confirmed a truce was declared between the pickets, and the blue and the gray mingled in harmony between the lines. Some large trees which grew between the picket lines, had long been wanted for fuel, and on this occasion detachments of men from each side cut them, divided the wood and carried it to their respective quarters. The boys in blue exchanged hardtack, coffee and other rations with the hungry Johnnies, receiving tobacco in exchange, and there was also a general swapping of knives, and rings and numerous other trinkets, formed from the gilt

fuses of exploded shells. Toward night the Confederates first learned that the mission to Hampton had resulted in failure, and as twilight approached, they gave warning with "Down, Yanks, we've got to shoot," and each side dropping behind the works assumed again a hostile attitude and picket firing was resumed by the enemy as usual.

The monotony was sometimes broken by visits from general officers. On several occasions General Meade with some members of his staff rode in as he was inspecting the lines, and on one occasion at least he was accompanied by General Grant and staff. General Hunt, chief of artillery, was at the redoubt quite often, and always had a pleasant word for us. When off duty, the men of the battery amused themselves in various ways; card playing was their chief pastime, though they never indulged in gambling. Some of the men displayed great ingenuity in the manufacture of rings and other trinkets from the fuses of shells which exploded in and around the fort. Many of these were sent home to friends in letters, and are still preserved as souvenirs of the war. Of course, writing letters occupied more or less of the time of the men while in winter quarters, and in these letters, every phase of the war was freely discussed and in their criticisms of army movements, the action of the officers was often unsparingly condemned. This is the prerogative of the soldiers of a republic, who feel that they have as much at stake in the contest as anybody.

A letter written from the fort under date of February 9, says: "There was quite a severe engagement about ten miles to our left. The action was commenced by the Second Corps which made an advance against the Southside Railroad. On the first day our troops were successful driving the rebels before them and capturing a number of prisoners. That night it snowed and the next day changed to rain and sleet. On this day a division of the Fifth Corps was attacked, and being short of ammunition it retreated in some confusion, and the entire corps fell back three miles. Here the matter rested that night and an awful night it was for our wounded, exposed to the pitiless storm.

The next morning our troops attacked at daylight, succeeded in forcing the rebels back and reestablishing their lines." A letter of the twenty-fifth of February says, "Last night we received orders to be in readiness to take out our guns and move towards the left, but a heavy storm coming on the expedition, whatever it was to have been, was indefinitely postponed.

The episode at Fort Stedman on the twenty-fifth of March was one of the most exciting of the winter. The first redoubt on our right was Fort Meikel, the next Morton, then Haskell, and then Stedman, the latter being some two miles from Fort Hell. The details of this engagement I have nothing to do with. We were aroused by the firing at our right and soon every man was ready for duty. The captain of the battery came up from the rear camp and took charge. The guns were taken to the rear of the redoubt and placed in position to rake any rebel column that might succeed in coming within range. But it is well known how this last offensive movement on the part of General Lee's army was repulsed after it had succeeded in capturing the fort; how the attacking force was driven back with great loss; how our lines were restored, and more than restored, for our troops captured the entrenched Confederate picket line and thus rendered easier the capture of the entire hostile works in our front a few days later.

Slowly the time passed away and the time for active operations was approaching. With artillery firing by day and picket shooting by night, it was with us something like a continuous engagement. To the time of the attack on Fort Stedman, we expected, and had been given to understand from corps headquarters, that should an attempt be made to break our lines, it would doubtless be at our redoubt. The nearness of the hostile lines at this point, and the unvarying reports from deserters that the line at this point was being mined, gave coloring to the idea that this was the spot where a breach might be attempted. This called for constant care and watchfulness; but we found that even hell was not without its amenities. We read, played cards, told stories, and sometimes

extracted pleasure from what we knew to be our greatest source of danger. When the boys heard the thud of the mortar battery they would watch for the missile, and from its course and its position when it commenced to approach the ground, they would guess or rather calculate where it would land. If they made up their minds that it was coming into the works they would dive into their "gopher holes" for safety, but if they concluded it would go over us they would climb upon the works and watch its effects upon the infantry camp at the rear.

But the bloody drama was drawing near its close. The desperate attack on Stedman and its repulse had convinced our leaders that General Lee would retire from his line, as soon as the condition of the roads would permit, and establish himself farther south. The Army of the Potomac was confident that this was to be the last campaign. Troops were withdrawn from the works, except a thin line to hold them, and a combined movement of infantry and cavalry was made toward the left, the result of which need not here be repeated. On the first day of April, orders were received to attack the works in our front on the following morning. We threw shot and shell upon them during the night to which they warmly responded. In the morning a column of Zouaves charged up the Jerusalem Plank Road and captured Fort Mahone, the guns of which, manned by men of our battery, were turned upon the enemy. General Potter was wounded in the fort this morning and was placed upon a camp-bed in our bomb-proof. General Chamberlain had been severely wounded here the year previous. We fired about a thousand rounds of shot and shell between Saturday night and Sunday night, Captain Twitchell of the battery being in command and at daylight on the morning of the third of April, with other troops, we entered Petersburg, and passing through, followed on in pursuit of Lee's retreating army.

We were in the works before Petersburg nine months and fifteen days, and in Fort Sedgwick, four months and one day. The reason why this redoubt was called Fort Hell, is not fully settled. Some have supposed it was so called because the rebels,

when they chose, could make it very hot for us, and this is indeed a plausible reason. But I incline to the opinion that it was first so called by General Hunt, chief of artillery of the Army of the Potomac. The story runs thus: Soon after the work was built, General Hunt was riding along the line, and coming to this new redoubt, asked the guard its name. "Fort Tilton, sir," responded the guard. Now it was not the practise on that line, to name forts in honor of living generals, and when General Hunt heard as the name of the works, the name of a general then living and on duty, exhibiting that disgust in face and voice which he no doubt felt, he exclaimed, "Fort Hell!" and Fort Hell it was ever after, in common parlance, though on the plan it was named Fort Sedgwick in honor of the gallant commander of the Sixth Corps who fell at Spotsylvania.



IN SIX PRISONS.

By Brevet Brigadier General CHARLES P. MATTOCKS.

HOLDING a commission as major of the 17th Maine Volunteer Infantry, I had, by the absence of the lieutenant-colonel on detached service in Maine and the detailing of the colonel to the temporary command of a brigade, been for nearly two months in the winter of 1863-64 in command of my regiment; and in this capacity had the proud satisfaction of seeing it under a state of drill and discipline which augured well for its conduct in the coming campaign, which we all then believed would result in the humbling of Lee's army and place us in possession of Richmond, for three long years the objective point for which the Army of the Potomac had so persistently contended. Preparatory to this supposed final effort, after the return of the colonel, for the first time during my service, I asked for and received a leave of absence, during which I visited my home, returning to my post of duty in the latter days of March. Within less than a week after my return, much to my surprise and disgust, I found myself detailed from my own regiment, to take command of the 1st U. S. Sharpshooters, a regiment better known as "Berdan's Sharpshooters," which achieved a world-wide reputation in the use of the rifle. These men had been recruited only after passing a most critical test of their marksmanship, and were not surpassed by an equal number of men in either army as skirmishers or sharpshooters. The colonel of the regiment had been mustered out of service, the lieutenant-colonel had been killed and the major was away on detached service in Washington, and the Washington authorities, always as solicitous for their own welfare as for the safety of the troops at the front, would not allow his return to the field, as his services were valuable in Washington. To add to these complications, the War Department had refused to muster any more field officers in this regiment. Thus my detail

seemed likely to be something more than temporary, as the regiment then had nearly another year to serve. However, in those days orders could not be disregarded, and I cheerfully assumed my new command, but not without many regrets at leaving my noble comrades of the 17th Maine, and not without a due sense of the honor conferred upon me by being selected to take charge of a body of men who had already made for themselves a national reputation.

Through the remaining days of March and the whole of April, until the opening of the Wilderness campaign, we endeavored, as well as we could, by skirmish drill and target practise, to prepare ourselves for the peculiar and important service which we knew we should be called upon to perform. When the head of Lee's columns struck Meade's lines in the tangled growth of the Wilderness, I found myself hurriedly deploying my men as skirmishers in front of the left of the Second Corps, with the 3d Michigan Infantry regiment as a skirmish support. We had not long to wait before our videttes announced the approach of a Confederate line of battle, which afterward proved to be the old "Stonewall" Brigade, in command of which General Thomas J. Jackson achieved the soubriquet of "Stonewall," by which name he has gone down into history. Falling back under orders, I had gathered in all but ten or fifteen of my men on the right of my line, who, in the thick growth of timber, had not noticed the movement on the left. In my attempt to get these men out I was captured with a portion of them, and at once had an opportunity to witness the art of war as practised by the enemy. I saw what few can record, and that was Grant and Lee actively engaged in the same battle, for shortly before I went forward Grant had ridden by, and shortly after my capture I noticed a fine, soldierly-looking general officer, with less of a staff retinue than graced some of our brigadier-generals, ride by amid considerable cheering, in the rear of the Confederate lines, and upon asking who the officer might be, was informed by a Confederate sergeant that the man inquired about was known among the soldiers as "Bobby Lee."

From the Confederate side, before I reached the rear of their lines, I saw enough of their practical discipline under fire to admire it. There was no leaving of the ranks by four or five men at a time upon the pretext of carrying off a wounded comrade. These duties were performed, and well performed, by trained stretcher-bearers, who, I was afterwards told, were chosen for their coolness, courage and strength, and not, as was often the case with us, selected by some colonel from men he did not care to keep when called upon to fill a detail for stretcher-bearers. Captured but two or three hours before sunset, we could distinctly hear the clash of arms in our front and could observe by the sound, as well as if we were eye-witnesses, where our line was pushing ahead or where it was being forced back. At the point where the gallant General Alexander Hays, commanding the brigade to which I was attached, was killed it seemed at one time as though his troops would break through the enemy's line, so much so, indeed, that the Confederate provost guard marched us to the right and rear, so as to put us out of the way of recapture by our own forces. At dark we found ourselves about two miles distant from the point of capture. Our squad of prisoners then numbered ten officers and one hundred and fifty men, but a larger number had already been sent to Orange court-house, twenty miles away.

Lying down to dreams of privations and sufferings, which afterward proved to be realities, we were awakened at early dawn, and began our weary march to Orange court-house over a dusty road and under a burning sun. Our escort consisted of a detachment of cavalry known as "Lee's Body Guard." These men were recruited from all sections of Virginia and were mounted upon horses owned in great part by themselves, and it was claimed that they could select from their number one or more men who would be familiar with any turnpike or even cross road which Lee's army might encounter in Virginia. From this command were selected many of the most noted and efficient of the Confederate scouts. One young fellow of this detachment entertained me by giving the positions occupied by

various brigades and regiments of the Second Corps on the night of our breaking camp when we started upon the Wilderness campaign. I thanked him for his information, and at the same time expressed my regret that I did not meet him and have a chance to entertain him when he visited our troops and was so near my own headquarters. I have never seen in any command a more gentlemanly, intelligent and soldierly body of men than were these young soldiers, who were, so to speak, a part of the military family of the Confederate commander-in-chief.

However, after we had entered the interior of the Confederacy, the class of men who guarded us were, as we found to our sorrow, of a far different make-up, one of whom unceremoniously confiscated my poncho, but not until, with my jack-knife, I had cut a few holes in it to let the water through. At Orange court-house we were turned over to the tender mercies of a provost guard, an officer of which searched us for articles which were contraband of war, while the privates of his command stole nearly everything they could lay their hands on. At Orange court-house, we took the cars for Lynchburg, Va., where we arrived May 9, without anything in the shape of events more startling than the fact that at Charlottesville the young ladies connected with a female seminary, mistaking us for Confederate troops, came rushing down the hill, with ringlets flying and handkerchiefs waving, and, upon discovering their mistake, returned to their school, amid the cheers of the Yankee soldiers, to resume their studies which had been interrupted by a sudden outburst of patriotism.

While on our way to Lynchburg our engine became temporarily disabled, and guards and prisoners alike disembarked to take a sniff of fresh air and view the scenery. At this point there was a large culvert, and, as I had always had something of a mechanical turn, it occurred to me that if I could only get under that culvert, I could practically apply to the curves of the masonry some of the principles of geometry learned under good old Professor Smyth, and then after dark, and the train

conveying my fellow prisoners had again started on its journey, I could creep out and make a map of the country. I got under the culvert all right, but — a Confederate soldier got me out in less time than it takes to tell the tale.

At Lynchburg we were allowed to leave the cars and enter the military prison then established at that point. The prison itself, as was frequently the case in the South, was an old tobacco warehouse, the only furniture of which was an old stove which had survived the previous winter. Here we remained from the ninth until the twenty-fifth of May. Our only bed was the floor of the building, and our only bedding was an occasional blanket which had been saved. My own outfit, at first, consisted of a pair of riding boots and a haversack, which, artistically placed in position, made a very substantial, if not a downy, pillow. I soon, however, entered into a copartnership, which gave me an undivided half of an old woolen blanket and a rubber cape. This manner of life was new to all. Several hundred of us, representing all arms of the service and nearly every loyal state, generally strangers to each other, were huddled together, with but little comfort for the present and less hope for the future. Some chafed and stormed, some were sullen and dejected, while others did not allow themselves to lose their hope or spirit. In the absence of books and newspapers, the only amusements were card playing, working out fantastic images with the pocket-knife from wood or bone, singing songs, telling stories or discussing the conduct of the war, especially that phase of it which had stopped the exchange of prisoners. We were allowed to write letters home by flag of truce, but each letter must be confined to one side of half a sheet of note paper, and we were not allowed to say anything which would reflect unfavorably upon the "Confederacy" or any of its officers. Some of us had managed to secrete a few dollars in greenbacks, and, by changing our money for Confederate scrip, could buy extra rations. The prices in Confederate money for some of these articles were as follows: Eggs, five dollars per dozen; coffee, fifteen dollars per pound; corn meal, one dollar

per pound ; wool blankets, twenty-five dollars each. Playing cards, being a "necessity" and finding many buyers, were sold at the remunerative price of eleven dollars per pack.

On the seventeenth of May, all the Federal officers at Lynchburg, one hundred and ten in all, myself among the number, were loaded into passenger cars and cattle cars, and slowly but, to our sorrow, surely, transported to Danville, Va., where we remained two days in an old tobacco warehouse. From Danville we were transported through North and South Carolina to Macon, Ga., which was to be our prison home for many weary weeks. The cars were old and rickety, and the roadbeds were sadly out of repair. As a result, we had an accident in South Carolina which came near being fatal to some of the passengers ; but, beyond a severe jolting by running the car wheels upon sleepers instead of over the rails, and a big scare as well among the guards as prisoners, all of whom jumped out together, no damage was done. After dumping two of our cars, the train lumbered along to its destination. Four or five hundred enlisted men, who had been transported upon our train, were switched off and sent, many of them, to a lingering death in the prison stockade at Andersonville.

When we reached Macon, we found a thousand Federal officers who had already been confined at that point several months before our arrival. From the outside of the prison we could see nothing but the high stockade with sentinels marching back and forth near the top. From the inside we could hear nothing. The large wooden gates swung ajar upon their squeaking hinges in an otherwise deathless stillness. One hundred and ten of us, side by side, by twos, wondering if all the people inside had died or had become too weak to speak, move forward, and as the head of the little column enters, instead of receiving brotherly greetings and handshakings, we hear nothing but savage yells and hootings, amid which we could distinguish such words as "Fresh fish !" "Fresh fish !" "Don't take that man's haversack !" "Don't steal his pocket handkerchief !" Inclined at first to be indignant at such treatment, we soon learned that

this was a sort of initiation given to every newcomer, and we all afterward fell readily into the same practise.

Once inside, we were not long in finding old friends who had been captured before us, and who now instructed us in the duties of our new life. The haggard appearance of many of these men, who had already experienced but a few months of prison life, was anything but encouraging to us whom they classed as "fresh fish," presumably because we had been but recently "caught." Here we settled down solidly to prison diet and prison discipline. At that time there were nearly twelve hundred of us living upon less than four acres of land. Afterward the number was increased to two thousand. Around the sides of our "yard" were sheds with posts and roofs but no sides. Under those roofs were two tiers of bunks where we slept, or tried to sleep at night. In the middle of the enclosure was a small wooden building used as a sort of commissary headquarters and for bunks. Twenty-two of the prisoners were Maine men, although some of them had entered the service from other states. This was exclusively an officers' prison, while that at Andersonville was used for enlisted men, it not being deemed prudent to have officers and men too near together for fear of plots to escape. Both these prisons were within one and the same military department, and both were in charge of General Winder, the notorious Captain Wurtz, who was afterward tried and executed by our authorities, being in immediate charge of the prison at Andersonville.

Our rations were issued to us raw. We were divided by the prison officials into messes of one hundred men or thereabouts, each mess having one of our own officers as commissary, whose duty it was to receive and issue rations to the individual members of his mess. These messes were by ourselves subdivided into squads of from three to six men each. These small squads had their own rules and regulations. In my own squad, one of our number was obliged to act as cook for a fixed number of days, and woe to the unhappy cook who spoiled or wasted any of our rations. Even your humble servant was upon one occasion

obliged to sustain, at no small personal risk, the proposition, advanced by himself but disputed by one of his messmates, that he was a skilful and economical cook. The point was never finally settled except in the writer's own mind, as the bystanders interfered and stopped the discussion, which had already resulted in a broken skillet and a black eye for the cook's assailant. An idea of the utter demoralization existing among men of such character as these prisoners were supposed to bear to the outside world may be gathered from the fact that it was not an uncommon thing to see men, who were generally friends, coming to blows over some foolish dispute, and soon shaking hands with each other and apparently again upon the best of terms. Fortunately their physical condition was generally such that they could not do each other much bodily harm. Our daily ration consisted of one and one-half pints of corn meal, one-quarter gill molasses, one-quarter gill of black beans, three ounces bacon, teaspoonful of salt, one-sixth gill of rice and an unmeasurable quantity of soap, water *ad libitum*. Of course, on a diet like this, and by reason of having no vegetable food except an occasional onion, which the lucky ones could buy at one dollar each in Confederate money, many of the prisoners became subject to scurvy. The presence of this disease was at first disclosed by a sluggish circulation of the blood, and many a prisoner knew, as he would push his thumb or finger into some soft part of his flesh and make an indentation to which the blood would but slowly return as the flesh returned to its normal position, that he too was marked for the dread disease. Later as his teeth loosened, his hair fell out and his weary limbs almost ceased to support him, is it not wonderful that not a single Federal officer succumbed to the flattering inducements offered by the Confederates to prove false to the stars and stripes as the price of liberty and perhaps life itself? Coffee was made by burning corn meal in a skillet and adding hot water to suit the taste. A little sorghum molasses was added. A sort of sauce or dip for corn bread was made by scorching the meal in a similar manner and adding a little fat

fried bacon. In this manner of cooking, by closely following my recipe and adding a rare degree of skill, I became quite an expert.

Our knowledge of the outside world was limited. One day we would hear that Grant was throwing shells into Richmond, that Sherman had taken Atlanta, and that all the prisoners were to be at once exchanged. The next day we would be told that Grant was retreating upon Washington, that Sherman had been outflanked by Hood and had abandoned his "march to the sea," and that no more prisoners would be exchanged until the end of the war.

The tenth of June, 1864, was an eventful day. We had among us five brigadier generals, several colonels, lieutenant-colonels and majors. Unexpectedly an order was received calling out the general officers, colonels, lieutenant-colonels and nine of the majors for exchange. The majors were taken alphabetically and the writer came within one of being taken. Such is fate. These officers were taken away, as they supposed, to be exchanged, but we learned afterwards, to be taken to Charleston and placed under the fire of our own guns, which were then making sad havoc, this placing the prisoners under fire being done by the Confederates to protect the city. Later on, as we shall see, more of our number were selected for the same purpose.

The amusing incidents of this prison life at Macon would fill a volume, while its privations and sufferings would fill many. It was difficult to procure any books to read, and the only way in which we could amuse ourselves at all with the solaces and delights of literature was by clubbing together and taking an hour or two each at some book which the fortunate possessor would pass around, and many a time in the bright Southern starlight, have I read and reread and committed to memory passages from some favorite author, many of which I have never forgotten, as the associations have firmly fixed them in my mind. In the absence of other amusements the prisoners would gather around some favorite story-teller, whose descriptions of "battles fought and victories won" were embellished by the narrator

by a rough stick with which he would trace upon the ground the positions where his comrades had fought and died. Others would indulge in patriotic harangues to enthusiastic listeners, and, often, when the fiery orator would be at the height of a well rounded and emphasized sentence, some impudent fellow would interrupt him by shouting, "Louder, Old Pudding-head!" "Give him air!" "Hire a hall!" "Give the calf more rope!" Well do I remember a gaunt, long-haired, fierce-visaged old officer from East Tennessee, standing not less than six feet and three inches in his stockings, who always resented such interruptions while he was detailing in impassioned voice the sufferings and privations of the East Tennesseans, and woe to the man who called him "Old Pudding-head!" or suggested giving him "more rope," for then there would be a rapid retreat, amid the cheers and shouts of his companions, as the only safety for the intruder.

At Macon, one of the prisoners had, or pretended that he had, a dream which he related for the amusement of his comrades. He dreamed that twenty years after the war, he was sitting in a restaurant in New York, cheering up and refreshing his declining years with a glass of wine and the productions of a French cook, when, to his surprise, ex-President Lincoln, Secretary of War Stanton, and General Butler entered. The conversation turned upon the treatment of Federal prisoners during the war of the Rebellion. Butler asked Lincoln whatever became of our prisoners who were confined at Macon, Ga., in 1864. Lincoln declared that he could not remember, but referred the matter to Stanton, who said he could not tell without consulting the official records of the War Department. A second dream revealed the fact that nothing upon the subject could be found in the archives in Washington; and finally a commission was sent by the government to Georgia, to ascertain the fate of these prisoners. Upon investigation it was found that in the busy times of the war these poor men were forgotten and all had died in prison.

On the thirtieth of June, a new squad of prisoners was ushered in, and as I with others rushed to the main entrance to

welcome them with shouts of "Fresh fish" and the regulation greetings accorded to newcomers, I perceived among the dejected and downhearted fellows, a young artillery officer, fresh from the front, and, as I peered into his once brilliant but now dejected countenance, I thought I saw the familiar look of a schoolboy friend of my almost forgotten youth. A second glance revealed to me the now distinguished superintendent of our Maine General Hospital, Doctor Charles O. Hunt, who exclaimed, "Why, Mattocks, are you here, too?" I was forced to admit that his conclusions were entirely correct.

Our guard consisted of conscripts taken apparently from such of the male population of Georgia as were either too young or too old to be drafted for service in the field. These men, being deprived of the more glorious and perhaps more hazardous privilege of shooting Yankee soldiers at the front, were in many instances inclined to fire off their muskets upon very slight provocation. One day, a prisoner approached the muddy brook running through one end of the grounds, for the simple purpose of getting water, as was our wont, when, without warning, as was claimed by eye-witnesses, he was fired upon by one of the sentinels, and mortally wounded. We were assured by the Confederate commander that the matter would be fully investigated, and we presume it was, as the sentinel was a few days afterwards promoted to sergeant and granted a leave of absence as a reward for his fidelity and watchfulness.

The Fourth of July was memorable. In the morning, instead of the regulation fantastics which we used to witness in Maine towns in our boyhood days, we were entertained by a live elephant composed of two men and a blanket, preceded by a tall keeper armed with a stout stick with a villainous looking hook at its end. After this, inspired by the elephant as well as the memories of the "ever glorious Fourth," we adjourned to the commissary building in the center of the enclosure, and, after a prayer by the chaplain, listened to patriotic speeches and songs, and when, near the close, a sprightly young fellow jumped upon the temporary rostrum, composed of two old barrels and a board,

and pulled from the recesses of his pockets a little American flag and called for three cheers, it seemed as if pandemonium had been let loose. The Confederate guard rushed in to see what the trouble was, but they didn't get that flag. Soon after this either from fear that our elephant might get loose or that the little flag might lead us into mischief, three additional pieces of artillery were planted so as to bear upon the premises, and we then had six guns bearing upon us, to emphasize the folly of any attempt at an outbreak. But we were not idle. We had learned from the men who had been confined at Libby Prison all about the famous tunnel through which Colonel Streight and his comrades had made their escape. Several of these subterranean passages were started by digging down under the sheds and then running horizontally toward the stockade. I was a co-owner, and a co-worker in one of these enterprises, and never did a stockholder in a Colorado mine, or a boomer of a Southern city site, feel more confident of a fortune than did I of my ultimate escape; but, alas, while our tunnel was progressing finely and had actually reached beyond the stockade, one dark night, a hungry cow, vainly seeking for grass by means of which she might delight her owner by increased flow of milk, with that stupidity which is common to animals, and without that sympathy for suffering which characterizes her sex, put an end to our engineering and our hopes by stepping upon the thin earth which covered the now nearly completed tunnel, and actually slumped down into the hidden passageway which, like the Trojan horse, was to conceal the soldiers of the enemy. In fact, that cow literally "put her foot in it."

Had it not been for the fact that the members of our mess had managed to keep a few articles of wearing apparel, as well as a few ornaments, which we readily sold, our sufferings would have been much greater. It was a paradise for advocates of paper money. A pair of common buckskin gauntlets would sell for twenty-five dollars in Confederate bills; a pair of top boots at one hundred and fifty dollars; a silver watch at one hundred dollars or more, while a gold watch was good for five hundred

dollars. But these prices were fully offset by those we had to pay for eatables and other necessities. I have in my diary a list recorded at the time, from which I quote as follows : butter six dollars per pound ; potatoes five dollars per peck ; tobacco four dollars and fifty cents per pound ; writing paper twelve dollars per quire. For a tin plate or tin dipper we were obliged to pay five dollars ; while a six-quart pail, an article used only by the most affluent of the prisoners, commanded the high price of thirty-seven dollars, which clearly shows that the passage of the McKinley bill has not increased the price of tinplate in the South at least. After so many weeks of housekeeping we had learned to improvise many a dish which served to vary the monotony of our regulations. I find among my recipes as recorded at the time, "Boiled pudding : two quarts of corn meal, one teaspoonful of salt, one of soda, four of vinegar, in lieu of yeast, one gill of pork fat ; mix with water to the consistency of batter. Put the whole into a bag and boil two hours. Sauce for above pudding : one-half gill of molasses, one-half spoonful salt, three of flour and one pint of boiling water. Stir ten minutes while boiling. To make vinegar : one pint of water, one-half gill of meal and same quantity of molasses. Let stand exposed to sun four days."

I have recipes for yeast, baked apple dumplings, and special delicacies which I will disclose to personal friends for their own use only, at present, and to be given to the world for the benefit of suffering humanity when Doctor Keeley makes known the gold cure for inebriety.

My diary says, under date of July 14 : "My business capital has now become reduced to the small sum of one Confederate dollar, which will buy a quart of blackberries, two sheets of paper, or a pint of peanuts. Upon the whole I think I will be prudent and save this money for any chance of sickness. My stockings are very much worn, and I have now come down to the prison level of bare feet, and do not think of putting on shoes at all." Through the months of May, June and July in such a latitude and with no protection from the scorching

sun upon hot days, we of course suffered considerably. Still, accustomed to heat and dampness and all the hardships of a soldier's life, we stood up remarkably well. The prisoners generally could be classed as "not sick." They were weak and poor in flesh, and many were dejected, and, of course, were gradually failing. In case of slight sickness we missed medicine and nursing. Especially in attacks of chills and fever the suffering was intense, as quinine could not be had for love or money, and whiskey was but a memory. I shall never forget the delight I felt in looking up once, while I was shaking with a chill, my teeth chattering so as to render speech almost impossible, and receiving from the hands of a messmate, Lieutenant Whitney, now the efficient chief clerk of the Bureau of Statistics in Washington, his last quinine powder, which he had kept secreted many months, he being one of the officers captured at Gettysburg, who had then already suffered a full year's imprisonment, and still looked down upon the victims of the Wilderness campaign as "fresh fish."

On the twenty-eighth of July, and after more than two full months' imprisonment at Macon, it was decided by the Confederate authorities to take out six hundred of us, and place us in Charleston under the fire of our own guns then bombarding the city from Morris Island and the Federal gunboats. While we had no desire to be food for gunpowder, we were quite willing to bid farewell to Macon, with its scanty shelter and more scanty fare, the recollections of sickness, the mingled hope and despair. We knew that by this change we would be placed as a human barrier between the deadly fire of our own artillery and the doomed city, yet we felt as we reluctantly left behind us twelve hundred of our comrades, with many of whom we had formed such friendships as can only arise and develop among men sharing a common danger, that any change would be welcome which would bring exemption from a continuance of scenes we had begun fairly to loathe.

The journey from Macon to Charleston was, so far as might be, a repetition of the discomforts of our previous travel in the

Confederacy as its military guests, except that we had just a bit of excitement resulting from a brilliantly planned but poorly executed scheme for the capture of our railroad train and the release of the prisoners who were passengers upon it. It had been decided that, when we approached Charleston and were but a short distance from a river which divided the pickets of the opposing forces, and when, too, we would be equally near the coast where possibly some of our gunboats might be hailed and send us a rescuing party, we would seize upon our guards, there being but four in each car, and arming ourselves with their muskets take possession of the engine and stop the train and then make one bold dash for liberty. All this was to be done under cover of darkness and at an hour when the weary guards, who had in fact been very much overworked, were least vigilant. The night was dark, the guards were sleepy. Many of them having confidingly loaned the passenger-prisoners their muskets from time to time, during the discussion which was going on as to the merits of the different kinds of muskets in use among the Federals and Confederates, did not notice that their muskets when returned, had been stripped of their percussion caps, which were necessary to the discharge of the pieces should the holders attempt to fire them off at runaway Yankees. Nor did the unsuspecting sentinels notice that while they themselves were unusually tired and sleepy, their prisoners, though very quiet and orderly, were on the alert at all times. The signal, which was to be given by the ringleaders at the head of the train was never, as a matter of fact, given and our plan was like the "best laid schemes of mice and men." It was fortunate for us that the expected signal was not given, for I afterward learned, by passing over the ground myself, that to reach any possibility of passing the pickets or reaching the seashore, we should have been obliged to traverse eight or ten miles of almost impenetrable swamp, guarded by the pickets and patrols of the enemy. As it was, eighty of our number escaped from the train, and all but six or seven were recaptured and brought back, many of them having been tracked and pursued by

hunters and dogs in the manner of hunting runaway slaves before the war, two, at least, being badly torn and bitten.

We finally arrived at Charleston, and were at once placed in the center of the city at a point then most exposed to the fire of our own artillery. At first, we were confined in the jail, and then, after a few days in the workhouse, were honored with lodgings in a fine large building called Roper Hospital. At least two hundred of us were thus honored. This place was paradise as compared with any quarters we had enjoyed before. At night we could sit out on the broad veranda and witness the shells from guns and mortars bursting in the air, in front and rear, and to the right and left of us, for General Foster, learning from his spies our position, had, within twenty-four hours after our arrival, so changed the range of his guns that our presence in Hospital Square, as it was called, at once made that one of the safest sections of the city. Soon after our arrival in Charleston, my own mess, then consisting of five members, received an addition in the person of Lieutenant Charles O. Hunt of the Fifth Maine Battery, whom I have already mentioned. We initiated Hunt by confiscating his gold watch, which was at once sold for seven hundred and fifty dollars in Confederate currency, by which we became one of the solid concerns of our community. Our capital was still more augmented by Captain Julius B. Litchfield of our mess who wrote a letter to a resident of Charleston, who happened to bear the same family name as Litchfield's maternal grandfather, and from whom, upon the plea of possible relationship traceable down through the Mayflower, he succeeded in borrowing one thousand dollars in "secesh" money. Our capital was still further increased. Lieutenant George H. Pendleton of our mess, now deceased, succeeded in getting five hundred dollars more from the French consul then resident in Charleston, probably reminding him how a distinguished countryman of the consul had aided our fathers in the gloomy days of the Revolution. Not to be behind in good works, the writer made the acquaintance of a devoted Union man, named Luke Blackmar, residing in Salisbury, N. C.,

who kindly advanced five hundred dollars in the paper of the Confederacy.

While in Charleston, at least after we entered Roper Hospital, we were allowed to remain in the building and adjoining yards without any guard, we having given our parole not to escape. From the twenty-ninth of July until the sixth of October, we remained in Charleston. Here, much to our surprise, although this city was called the hot-bed of secession, we were better treated by the authorities and received more favors from the citizens than at any point in the Confederacy. Although nominally placed under the fire of our own guns as hostages for the protection of the city, we were, by the changing of the range of the guns by our artillerists, so far from being in a very dangerous position, that our only casualties were the smashing down of a little dinner table and the slight wounding of one of the men sitting at the table by a fragment of shell which penetrated our building. Another shell exploded directly over us, and a few fragments buried themselves in the yard, doing no damage to any one. Toward the latter part of September, the yellow fever made its appearance and soon began to do sad havoc in the city. It was not long before it reached the prisoners and many of them died of the dread disease. Neither did the Confederate soldiers escape. Indeed the prison commandant and his adjutant both died of the fever within a few days after it first appeared. The epidemic having gained a sure foothold, we were transported by rail to Columbia, S. C., which was a prison camp, rather than a stockade prison. Here our rations were meager, the nights soon became chilly, and want of sufficient shelter was keenly felt after the comparative luxuries of Roper Hospital.

While at Charleston, my wants had been in a measure relieved by the receipt of a box of clothing sent me by friends at Hilton Head, among whom was Major W. L. M. Burger, then serving as assistant adjutant-general to Major-General Foster. Soon after reaching Columbia I learned from this my friend in the time of need, that I had been selected for special exchange, and

my delight can be better imagined than described, when, on the fourteenth of October, amid the cheers and congratulations of the poor fellows I was leaving behind, and with my pockets crammed with letters for dear ones at home, I bade, as I then thought, a long farewell to old "Camp Sorghum." Again I was doomed to disappointment. Having proceeded to Charleston I remained there on parole a day or two and was then taken to a military post near Pocatigo, about one hundred miles from Charleston, where as I was told I was to be exchanged for a Confederate officer of my own rank. With sad recollections and fond anticipations I prepared to bid farewell to the Confederacy. Honored with a seat in an old ambulance drawn by a still more aged mule, after riding fifteen miles over a rough road, accompanied by an officer of General Hardee's staff, although I was still on parole, I reached the little stream which divided the Federal and Confederate picket lines. My escort was Captain Nevill Soulé, son of the famous Louisiana senator; and my acquaintance with this gallant officer was most agreeable. Here I met one of our officers in full uniform, while across the stream paced our sentinels with measured tread. I was nearly overcome with joy when I thought in a few moments I should be within our own lines and under the protection of our flag. Judge of my consternation and disgust when told by the Federal officer having charge of the matter that he had received a telegram from the secretary of war directing him to hold the exchange suspended until further orders from Washington. Back I went to the Confederate camp. Again and still again — three times in succession — I had my ride in the mule wagon and visited the flag-of-truce boat, the last time only to be informed that my exchange had been annulled and that I must go back to "durance vile," Secretary Stanton having decided to grant no more special exchanges. Meanwhile the Confederate officer for whom I was to have been exchanged, and who had actually been allowed to enter the Confederacy on parole, to effect this very exchange, was compelled to go back to our lines and remain a prisoner. This officer was none other

than Major Lamar Fontaine of Texas, who had distinguished himself by carrying despatches and percussion caps from Johnston to Pemberton during the siege of Vicksburg, being obliged, in doing this, to pass through line after line of our troops then besieging Vicksburg.

My experience in this wild and fruitless attempt at getting an exchange, although sad and disheartening had its bright spots, among which I particularly remember a most agreeable young lady who was being sent across the lines from Philadelphia to her home in Georgia, and who accompanied us in the ambulance on our return to the headquarters of Major Jenkin's Cavalry Regiment where I was a guest, or at least a well-treated prisoner on parole, for three days. On Sunday morning I was invited by the commandant to witness the inspection, and was treated with as much courtesy as if I had been a French or British officer visiting within the Confederate lines. I will add that wherever I met a Confederate officer, who was serving or who had served at the front, I was always treated with great courtesy, but when I came in contact with home guards or home guard officers who had seen nothing of active service, the treatment was unsoldierly and often even brutal.

I returned to Columbia "a sadder and wiser man." From that moment I determined to escape, and had but a few days to wait before I did so, and that, too, in broad daylight, with Hunt and Litchfield of my mess. We told the sentinel we were going out for wood, that we were on parole for that purpose. Was it a justifiable falsehood? When we got out the wood did not suit us, and having learned that there was an abundant supply in the range of mountains separating Tennessee from North Carolina, we struck a northwest course, and should in due time have reached Knoxville, had we not encountered a squad of natives and Cherokee Indians (then in the Confederate service) who insisted upon our returning with them as their guests.

As it was, after a tramp of four hundred and twelve miles through the enemy's country,—more than half this distance being made by night,—having been lost five days in the laurel

thickets,—lying down at night, with no shelter and almost no clothing, upon ground covered with snow, wading sometimes streams in which ice had actually appeared, subsisting two days on half rations and three on none, we were at last delivered back to the tender mercies of the Confederate authorities, who immediately placed us in confinement at Danville, Va.

I had visited Danville on my way to Macon and was familiar with the place. Here I remained, after my thirty days of liberty, until February, when I was taken with others to Libby Prison at Richmond, from which point I was exchanged barely in season to participate in the glorious campaign which ended in the surrender of General Lee and the downfall of the Confederacy.

Should I undertake to tell you what befell us while we were making our fruitless dash for liberty, which has already been done by an abler pen ; or should I endeavor to describe the long weary days we spent at Danville, where we were packed down upon a hard floor so closely that at night there was hardly standing room ; or if, encouraged by your kind attention, I should venture to relate the untold and amusing incidents which cheered and made endurable so many months of prison life ; and if, perchance, my memory should flit back to that grand transition from confinement to liberty, and I should attempt to describe my feelings as I rode along at the head of my regiment through the streets of Richmond and looked up and saw Confederate prisoners peering through the same grated windows from behind which but a few short weeks before I myself had watched the gray-coated sentry in the night pace back and forth and shout "Twelve o'clock and all is well," I should prolong this article too far into the night for men who have reached that age at which good habits and early hours are at least a safeguard in their declining years.

THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION OF 1864.

By Lieutenant HENRY N. FAIRBANKS.

I WAS a member of Company E, 30th Maine Volunteers, Third Brigade, First Division, Nineteenth Army Corps, commanded by Major-General William B. Franklin. The following paper contains some recollections concerning the battles of the Red River Expedition under Major-General N. P. Banks.

The van of this army marched from Franklin, La., on the fourteenth day of March, 1864, followed by the several commands, up the Bayou Teche and across the state of Louisiana, arriving at Alexandria, March 25. After these long, weary marches we passed through the town of Natchitoches, and continued on the road for Shreveport, La., our objective point, leaving Grand Ecore, April 6.

Referring to my diary under date of the seventh of April, 1864, I find that the 30th Maine was detailed to guard the wagon train on the road from Grand Ecore to Pleasant Hill, La. The day was rainy and our regiment was obliged to march five or six miles after nightfall, in the pine woods, and it was so dark that we could not keep together unless we were continually saying, "this way," etc., thus following each other's voices. We encamped in the woods and were not in the best condition for the hardships before us on the next day (April 8). In the morning we were eight miles from Pleasant Hill, and, with our train, pushed on to that place, where we were relieved by the 153d New York Volunteers. Marching fast for ten miles, we joined our brigade in temporary camp at Carroll's Mills at three o'clock in the afternoon, just in time to receive the order to move with the brigade which was hurried forward, and we obeyed the order to "double-quick," which was given us about two miles from where we took up our line of battle in rear of the Thirteenth Corps.

BATTLE OF SABINE CROSS ROADS, LA.

We went into the fight "on the right by file into line" as support. The left of the regiment suffered, as "we were placed in such a position that we received but could not deliver fire. Major Whitman and some twelve or fifteen men were wounded." The enemy were handled roughly and repulsed in this part of the battle of Sabine Cross Roads, although not sufficiently to give the Union arms success, as General Banks had allowed his army to string out in line of march in such a manner that no large force could be concentrated at short notice, unless he should fall back; an act which he seemed ready to embrace at the very first opportunity.

I have always supposed the 30th Maine Regiment the last to go into action at Sabine Cross Roads, and this gave me an excellent opportunity to observe the rout and disorder of the army. The road was blocked by wagons, crowded with cavalry, teamsters and negroes, and all were wild with excitement; wagons had been abandoned and drivers were riding their animals furiously to the rear. In my opinion, the several commands preserved their order better at Bull Run, than did General Albert L. Lee's division of cavalry in this battle, and I saw something of the Bull Run disaster. This remark is only applied to the cavalry and teamsters. I saw very few infantrymen, as we passed to the front, falling back unless wounded.

The firing ceased soon after dark and we remained in line of battle until ten o'clock, at which time General Banks' chief of staff gave the order to fall back in "the same order in which we had come upon the field." I well remember this, as I gave that officer a drink of water from my canteen, and heard his order when given to Colonel Francis Fessenden of our regiment. Back we turned and were marching the remainder of the night.

At daylight General Emory detailed Company E, of our regiment, to keep back the cavalrymen, who were riding past us, very much to the annoyance of Emory who said to one, "Don't you know that a cavalryman should never pass an infantryman?"

The disorderly cavalry continued to press by us and finally General Emory drew his pistol and shot at one who had refused to halt, as he attempted to run his horse around some bushes.

We reached Pleasant Hill on the morning of the ninth of April, 1864, at about seven o'clock. It is claimed that it is fifteen miles from Pleasant Hill to Sabine Cross Roads. If to this we add the morning march of eight miles we can count thirty-eight miles march during the twenty hours, beside the fatigue and excitement of the battle.

BATTLE OF PLEASANT HILL, LA.

We were in line of battle all the forenoon awaiting the Confederates. At two o'clock in the afternoon Companies E and D, of the 30th Maine were ordered out into the woods as skirmishers in front of our (Benedict's) brigade, which was composed of the 162d, 165th and 173d New York and 30th Maine infantry. Captain Warren H. Boynton, with Company D, was ordered to deploy his company and advance well into the woods, while Captain George W. Randall held Company E in reserve. At fifteen minutes before five o'clock the Confederates advanced a line of battle, though there had been some picket firing for some hours before. Captain Boynton came to the reserve, saying that his company had been driven in and scattered, with considerable loss, by a line of battle which was then advancing. The order had been given us not to attempt to hold the enemy, but draw him out of the woods. Acting upon this order Randall, who commanded the whole skirmish line, marched Company E out of the woods under a heavy fire which, for the most part, passed over our heads, though it disconcerted some members of our company and gave the officers some trouble to keep them in their places which, however, they succeeded in doing, and not a man left the company while crossing the field between the woods and our brigade.

When nearly out to the line of our brigade, Captain Hoffman, of General Emory's staff, rode out to meet us, and ordered Randall to put his company into a field-ditch in front of our brigade,

on the right of the 162d New York volunteers and in front of Taylor's regular battery (L). We were not long in covering ourselves from their fire, and in the ditch watched the approach of the Confederates who, when fairly out of the woods, halted for a minute or two to straighten up their line. They threw up their hats and yelled, and seemed eager for battle. The Confederates came on with a full brigade and the 162d New York began to fall back without delivering half a volley, followed by the 165th New York and 173d New York. I note that Colonel Fessenden says that the 165th New York were the first to give way. The 162d New York was the first I noticed leaving us on the field.

As Randall was fighting his company under his own eye he did not give the order "to rise and fire" until after the New York regiments referred to had retreated and the enemy were within easy range. Then came the order as above, and our company of fifty men served notice with muskets upon the oncoming brigade, and we received a direct response, — such a severe one that our boys began to fall all about us. First Lieutenant Strout was shot in the head and left dead on the field. Seeing that it was useless to attempt to hold a whole brigade with one company, Randall gave the order to retreat.

As we began our retreat up the slope, Hoffman again made his appearance and ordered Randall, with his company, to lie down and hold Taylor's Battery just behind us. This order was obeyed, but men could not long stand this ordeal, and as Randall was shot through the shoulder while executing the order, we again retreated.

When I passed between the guns of Taylor's Battery, left on the field, only two horses were standing and every artilleryman had been killed or had disappeared. Just behind the battery, some rods, we came upon a new line of battle, which proved to be, upon inquiry, the 24th Missouri, Shaw's Brigade, Sixteenth Corps.

The Confederates charged and took Taylor's Battery, but only to possess it for a very brief period, as the fire of Shaw's

Brigade referred to, together with portions of our brigade, mowed them down, and a general charge upon the enemy pushed them back, and finally into the woods whence they had come. My diary says: "The fire was terrible; the Sixteenth Corps was in line of battle and we rallied with them, charged the enemy, and drove them back into the woods with great loss, and many prisoners left in our hands. They captured our battery but we took it back immediately." Here I fix the fact of the fierce contest for possession of the battery, for I well remember the dead and wounded Confederates about the guns as we drove them back, and one asked me to loosen his belt as he was in great distress.

After the charge with the 24th Missouri I observed the colors of the 30th Maine on my left, and rallied a few men of my company about them. I well remember the sound of a ball as it struck Corporal Marshall, one of the color-guard, on his leg, which gave him a severe wound.

Following the charge which was general by this time, I made an attempt to capture a prisoner, as many had taken shelter from danger in the field-ditches and behind the bushes, rather than take the chance of running back to the woods under our fire; but some kind comrade was always a few feet in advance of me and my desire was not gratified.

Advancing to the woods on the left of the position taken up at the outset of the battle by Benedict's Brigade, I found the 30th Maine in order in the woods, where they, with others, had driven the foe, and as the fighting was over I gained permission from the commanding officer to return to the battle-field, to look for Captain Randall. Before I could cross the field it became very dark and, as it was useless to continue my search further, I went into one of the negro cabins on the field, accompanied by a comrade of my company, where we found a wounded Confederate from Price's Army, who had been shot through the heel. Sleep soon overpowered us. I had grave doubts of Banks' staying ability, so I would awake myself each hour to be on watch for the retreat which I expected would take place.

At three o'clock I heard the artillery wheels and aroused my companion, bade good-by to my newly-made Confederate friend, and struck a smart pace. It was soon light and I became anxious to find my command, and by great effort came up with them at nine o'clock. I was warmly greeted by Captain Randall and members of the company, as they supposed me wounded or dead. I then learned that Company E had lost twenty, seventeen killed and wounded and three prisoners. Nearly every member of Company E was hit in clothing or equipment. My diary says that the loss of the regiment was one hundred and thirty-nine killed and wounded, besides the prisoners. The Confederates lost two battle-flags in this fight — those of the 11th Missouri and 19th Texas. On the Texas flag were the words "Texans can never be slaves."

This battle of Pleasant Hill was a severe musketry fight, and General William B. Franklin, who commanded the Nineteenth Corps, is authority for saying that from musketry he had never experienced a severer fire. Colonel Benedict was killed, and Colonel Fessenden, of the 30th Maine, assumed command of the brigade and retained it. The 30th Maine was a new regiment and some sport was made of us when we joined the older regiments; but we heard nothing more of that after the battle of Pleasant Hill.

I well remember a mounted officer in front of the brigade which advanced upon us while we were in the field-ditch. He rode back and forth regardless of danger. John S. Frost, a private of Company E, and a noted marksman, observing him, rose from the ditch and fired at him. He fell from his saddle. This was observed by several comrades, as it was before Randall gave the order to fire. It may have been General Walker whose division charged us, as he was wounded in the assault.

We encamped the night of the tenth at Pine Ridge, and the next day (eleventh) arrived at Grand Ecore, and were ordered immediately on picket where we remained in the woods all of that dark, rainy night. We were entrenched at Grand Ecore from the twelfth to the twenty-first of April, at which time we

made a night march of thirty-seven miles on the road to Alexandria, La. At Cane River Crossing we were met by General Dick Taylor, who with his army had planted batteries, and it became necessary to dislodge them.

BATTLE OF MONETT'S BLUFF.

The brigades of Birge and Fessenden were selected for the purpose of falling upon the enemy's left wing. Making a detour of three or four miles we forded the river with difficulty. Many movements were necessary, across bayous and swamps and through tangled woods, before the enemy was found posted on a high bluff known as Monett's. Birge had the advance with a skirmish line, but to our brigade, commanded by General Francis Fessenden, was assigned the duty of carrying the bluff. I chanced to hear the order of General Fessenden as given to Colonel Thomas H. Hubbard, who commanded the 30th Maine. While awaiting orders the skirmishers had been firing lively and we had sheltered ourselves under a fence. The order came, "Charge and commence firing!" and the whole brigade moved forward. In the immediate front of the 30th Maine there was a high fence, then an open field with another fence, then a slashing over a swamp with water two or three feet deep. Upon a high bluff, which was heavily wooded, the Texans were well concealed, but we carried the bluff, notwithstanding the fact that we could not bring our muskets to bear upon them until at close quarters. That they improved the opportunity is well attested, for though the engagement could not have lasted over fifteen minutes, the casualties of the 30th Maine were eighty-six. There were twelve killed, including two officers. General Fessenden led his brigade gallantly and lost his leg, which was deeply regretted, I may safely say, by every man under his command.

This was a sharp fight with small loss to the Confederates, who were well covered and when pressed took to their heels. After the colors were planted on the bluff and we had formed, Colonel Hubbard came along the line to see who were present.

It was my pleasure then to command Company E. Passing near me I showed him my left arm, the blouse torn out by a ball, making only a slight wound. He lifted his foot and I saw that a wrinkle had been shot away from his riding-boot. No words passed between us at the time. In my diary I wrote: "The result of the charge was that we drove the rebels from the hill and remained complete master of the whole field." The enemy retreated and soon the pontoons were put down and the army continued its march. We suffered exceedingly from heat and arrived at Alexandria, April 25, 1864. We were followed by thousands of negroes (contrabands, as we called them at that date). It was a sight to be remembered. Fantasies of a Fourth of July could not compare with these dark sons of toil, seeking liberty with their household goods which they carried upon their heads or placed upon mules, as was most convenient.

Among those who were in advance with our company in the charge at Monett's Bluff were privates Brown and Wentworth. When Wentworth had fairly ascended the hill he found himself face to face with a Confederate soldier. Each had an empty musket and the Confederate had commenced loading a little in advance of Wentworth. From appearances it would seem that Wentworth would be the first to suffer. Captain Randall was on the spot at this moment and, taking in the situation at a glance, winged the Confederate with a pistol shot, whereupon, this man divested himself of every article that would impede his flight and ran swiftly over the bluff. Brown was shot dead by a ball in the head. Just before the charge I heard him say "The ball was never molded that will kill me." So much for the truth of premonition.

Three privates of Company E found it convenient not to go forward with the company in this charge. After the fight, one of them came to the company. As first sergeant, I asked him, "Where have you been during the fight?" He replied, "With a New York regiment." Then I added, "How many shots

have you fired ? ” He replied “ Eight.” Then carefully examining his cartridge-box and the nipple of his gun, I found the evidences unmistakable that he had lied to me. Taking him to Captain Randall, he admitted his falsehood. After we had arrived at Alexandria a white post was set up in the street with a placard on which the word “ Coward ” was nailed, and these men were tied to the post for a few hours by order of Captain Randall. This is mentioned to show something of the discipline.

The 30th Maine was engaged in picket, forage and fatigue duty, and contributed its share to building the dam designed by Colonel Bailey which relieved our gunboats on the Red River, until May 13, 1864, at which time the army began its movement to the Mississippi.

MANSURA PLAINS.

The Confederates showed fight occasionally and annoyed us by picking up stragglers, or men who fell out in pursuit of water. Near Marksville, La., on the sixteenth of May, they made a stand on the prairie and we fully expected a battle. Again I quote from my diary : “ After we marched through the parish of Marksville, we were ordered into line of battle. There was artillery fighting in front, supported by cavalry and mounted infantry. We moved over the prairie, known as Mansura Plains, the rebels continuing to fall back under the heavy fire of our batteries. Their shells came over and near us, but unaccountably to me they did not explode. This I consider one of the finest sights of the whole war. The Confederate army was in full view, while our army was in line of battle, advancing over a rolling prairie, both in sight of the common eye from right to left. We marched about three miles in line of battle. The whole Confederate force was estimated about sixteen thousand. We desired that they would fight us here if at all. General A. J. Smith with the Sixteenth Corps had the right ; General Emory of the Nineteenth Corps the left, while the Thirteenth Corps was the

reserve, with the cavalry on the right and left flanks. I am sure that what I have seen to-day has not and will not occur again. Consider! More than thirty thousand men all in line of battle, with banners unfurled ready for action, and all of this great array within scope of the common eye."

The Confederates finally retreated, followed by our cavalry. During this affair we suffered considerably for water, and I recall the fact that I saw our soldiers strain water, then add black pepper to it to take away the nauseating taste.

Our next camp was at Simmsport on the Atchafalaya River. In this vicinity a fight took place on the eighteenth, chiefly by the cavalry on the Union side. A bridge across this river was made by placing together the bows of twenty-two transports which were lashed and over which planks and boards were laid. The soldiers hauled the wagons while the teamsters led their horses. When all were safely over this wide river the transports steamed away and this temporary bridge was no more.

After marching about two miles we bivouacked under large oak trees. Consulting my journal I find this remark: "It is a beautiful spot; well might an artist find here a grand subject. A worn and tired army in bivouac, on the bank of a beautiful river, enjoying refreshing baths afforded by its cooling waters."

Nothing further of much import took place and we continued our marching until we reached the Mississippi on the night of the twenty-second of May, 1864, and camped in a beautiful field of clover.

The following day we took up permanent camp at Morganza Bend, and the Red River Campaign had come to an end. In the evening I was ordered to report at the quarters of Colonel Thomas H. Hubbard, who then handed me my first commission.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.

By Brevet Brigadier-General THOMAS W. HYDE.

WHEN a large part of the Army of the Potomac was defeated at Chancellorsville by General Lee, hope rose very high at the South. Public opinion there insisted upon an invasion of the North. Even when General Lee made a requisition for rations, the Confederate commissary general is said to have endorsed his request, "Go seek them in Pennsylvania." General Lee, in accordance with this state of feeling, perhaps sympathizing with it himself, moved two of his three great corps across the Rappahannock, leaving Hill's Corps to mask his movement. General Hooker, commanding the Army of the Potomac, soon learned that something was going on and moved also to the northwest and Hill followed after Longstreet and Ewell. Hooker's movement was parallel to that of his adversary, the head of whose column, under Ewell, was soon driving our small forces, under Milroy, from the Shenandoah Valley. The Blue Ridge separated the advancing armies. That of the Confederates reached at one time from Martinsburg on the Potomac nearly back to Chancellorsville, some hundred miles, and it was at this time that the President, an unconscious strategist, sent one of his characteristic despatches to General Hooker, "The animal is very thin somewhere; could you not break him? A. Lincoln." There is little doubt that his advice was good, as the column might have been easily cut and Hill destroyed before Lee could return to his assistance. But Hooker was paralyzed by the apparent need of protecting Washington, like other leaders before and after him, and the golden opportunity was lost forever.

Both armies pressed on by day and by night. Lee crossed at Martinsburg and pushed up the Cumberland Valley into Pennsylvania to the great consternation of the unprotected North, while the Army of the Potomac crossed at Edward's Ferry, always covering Washington and Baltimore. At Frederick, Maryland, General Hooker was relieved at his own request, he having asked to have the garrison of Harper's Ferry, ten thousand strong, added to his command and, being refused by the commander-in-chief. General Halleck, General George G. Meade was appointed in his place.

Meade immediately joined this garrison to his army and was never censured by General Halleck for so doing. I happened to be at the headquarters of the army when Hooker turned over his command to Meade, and recall Hooker's manly bearing and Meade's nervous, earnest manner as they conferred a few moments together. It was a vast responsibility to take so suddenly, but well did Meade carry it to the end.

From Frederick the different corps were pushed out on different roads, fan like, to feel for an enemy, yet not so far apart as to be beyond supporting distance. The First Corps, General Reynolds, following Buford's Cavalry went out beyond Gettysburg and when Buford became engaged, their leading brigades charged in gallantly to his support, driving the enemy and capturing Archer's Brigade.

The men seemed to be in wonderful spirits that bright summer morning in July and, as they got up rapidly into line, would shout, "We have come to stay," and, as General Doubleday said before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, "very many of them never left that ground."

The advantage at this time was decidedly with the Union troops, but a Confederate sharpshooter killed General John J. Reynolds, one of the brightest and bravest soldiers the war produced.

Soon a heavier pressure was felt from the rebel side. It seems that Lee was concentrating his different corps upon Gettysburg marching south, while Meade was doing the same

thing with part of his marching northwest, and Lee marching on more roads was doing it faster and putting his troops in line faster, so the balance of the day was but a record of the heavy struggle of Buford's Cavalry and the First Corps and Howard's Eleventh Corps, to maintain their ground, constantly assaulted by ever-increasing masses. Finally outflanked, their remnant was withdrawn through Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill, a very strong position.

The 16th Maine Volunteers, commanded by Colonel Tilden, of Hallowell, and the Second Maine Battery, commanded by General James A. Hall, of Damariscotta, did remarkable service in the fight upon the first day by the First Corps.

Nightfall found the Confederates too much exhausted to pursue their advantage, and the Union troops were being rapidly reenforced. Thus ended the first day of Gettysburg—a fight accidentally begun and bloody to both sides. To the Northern army defeat gave a strong position. The Southern leader should have taken a lesson from the magnificent fighting of the First Corps in the open field. It is probable that he did not see it personally or it might have taught him the folly of his direct attacks on the days following. It has always seemed fortunate for us that death removed Stonewall Jackson before Gettysburg. He would have commanded on the first day and his marvelous celerity of movement would have probably wrested Cemetery Hill from us before we had troops enough upon it.

During the long moonlight night that preceded the second day's battle, the dusty turnpikes leading to Gettysburg were filled with many thousands of the blue and gray, marching wearily and sleepily toward the positions that so many of them were about to moisten with their blood. But as I am to give some of my own recollections I will go back a little and bring them up to the time I have brought the narrative.

On the thirtieth of June, 1863, the Sixth Army Corps, under the command of General John Sedgwick, to whose staff I was attached, reached the pretty little town of Manchester, Md.,

distant about twenty miles from the headquarters of the army then at Taneytown, and thirty-six miles from Gettysburg, towards which columns of both armies were directing themselves ignorant of each other's vicinage. It was fine summer weather and the young gentlemen of the staff improved the next day by making the acquaintance of the fair Union ladies of the place. At five in the afternoon, the general wanted to send an officer to General Meade's headquarters for orders and information and as I happened to be about, I was chosen. With an orderly I rode twenty miles to Taneytown, through a beautiful country, the air filled with the scent of flowers and new-mown hay. Near Taneytown I came upon General Hancock, riding to headquarters from the field, and he told me of the gallant fight of the First Corps that day, how they had been defeated by greater numbers at last, how General Reynolds died, and of the new line formed in the cemetery of Gettysburg. Soon we saw the headquarters' tents glimmering in the darkness and I reported to General Seth Williams, adjutant-general of the army, who gave me some refreshments and told me there was a council of war going on in General Meade's large hospital tent next to his. After waiting a while he took me in, and I saw General Meade in the center, standing by a table covered with maps, and several general officers grouped around. General Meade, after finishing a remark he was making in a low voice when I entered, said: "To-morrow, gentlemen, we fight the decisive battle of the war. Where is the officer from the Sixth Corps?" As I stepped forward he handed me, written on yellow tissue paper, the orders for the corps, and another for General Newton to take command of the First Corps. He told me to commit them to memory and destroy them in case of need, as the enemy's cavalry was reported scouting about. He then asked me if I had a cavalry escort; when I told him I had not, he offered me one. I told him I could get through quicker alone. He then said, "Tell General Sedgwick that I expect to put him on the right, and hope that he will be up in time to decide the victory for us."

General Meade's solemn bearing impressed me very much, and I felt some awe at the circumstances in which I was placed, for I was little more than a boy in age. Near midnight I started on my return, feeling as if I had something to do with the fate of the nation. After a long gallop I came upon farmers driving off their horses, who told me that Stuart's cavalry was just behind them, and I kept a bright lookout, several times hiding in the woods and waiting till mounted men got by, whose hoof-beats were plainly audible in the still night. I don't think I passed any rebels, though, for their cavalry was, unfortunately for Lee, cut off from our rear. However, I did not know that, and as I was hiding again about three in the morning and holding my horse's nose, instead of some of Mosby's gentry, I saw General Sedgwick's straw hat appear through the trees at the head of the corps. General Newton was riding with him and I delivered the orders. Now General Sedgwick, hearing of the battle, had started the corps for Taneytown, and the orders were to take the Baltimore Pike for Gettysburg, thirty-six miles away. If anything had happened to me that night he would have gone on to Taneytown, taking two sides of the triangle instead of one, and we should have made something like fifty miles instead of thirty-six. We then could not have arrived on the second day, which might have changed the fate of the battle, for eighteen thousand troops not coming up would probably have made a difference in the memorable council of war held on the night of the second day, and the question "Shall the Army of the Potomac fight here?" have been answered differently. We all like to think ourselves of some use and such were my youthful speculations. General Sedgwick, though unusually stern and quiet, gave me a kind word, and we turned the head of the column to make a cross-cut of a few miles to the Baltimore Pike, and then began one of the hardest marches we ever knew, thirty-six miles in dust and unusual heat; but the men pressed on with vigor and courage through it all, feeling themselves on Northern soil again and feeling that we were expected to decide the victory. My continuous ride

was over seventy miles when we stopped behind the circle of hills over which the cannon smoke was rising, and where many a little white cloud, almost resting in the air, showed each where a rebel shell had burst.

While we had been toiling along the Baltimore Pike so many weary miles, many men with feet bleeding and scarcely a man falling out, we heard no news. We were aware that our people were engaged only by the booming of the artillery which sounded strangely muffled, coming from behind the horseshoe of hills that made the Union position.

The beautiful dawn of the second day of the battle looked upon the bulk of both great armies in readiness for action ; the Confederates, about seventy thousand strong, the Union Army, about eighty thousand, marshaled against each other in grim array. Our people had a circular position with the bow toward the enemy. The rugged sides of Culp's Hill formed the right, the gentle slopes and plateau of the cemetery the center, and behind, our left, which had been pushed out to the Emmitsburg Pike by General Sickles, frowned Great and Little Round Top. The Confederate line enveloped ours and that became one of their chief disadvantages in the fight, as the distances were greater going around their half-circle with orders or reenforcements, very much greater than ours were to take a radius or an arc of our circle. The unconnected nature of many of their attacks can thus be accounted for. Both sides spent much of the forenoon maneuvering for position. But Lee organized two attacks, one on our right at Culp's Hill and the cemetery by Ewell ; and the other by Longstreet with Hood's Texas Division and McLaw's, intended to outflank our left. Both were expected to have been delivered earlier in the day and much recrimination has been indulged in by the Southern generals since on this subject. The attack upon Culp's Hill, which formed the right of our line, was furious in the extreme, but after some hours of fight, when darkness fell, the only advantage gained by the Confederates was the possession of a part of the line of the Twelfth Corps, and they were unaware

that they had almost reached the Baltimore Pike upon which were our trains, hospitals and ammunition wagons.

Longstreet's attack, if delayed, was magnificent, even as his attack at Chickamauga was magnificent. There was an angle in our line on Sickles' front. Longstreet put his whole force at this angle, near which was the celebrated Peach Orchard, and doubled Sickles back on the Second Corps in one direction and toward Devil's Den and Little Round Top in the other. During this part of the action and the fighting which followed, the 3d Maine, the 4th Maine and the 17th, 19th and 20th Maine Regiments did great honor to the Pine Tree state.

Little Round Top, the possession of which meant victory to the Confederates, was only occupied by a signal officer at the time, who kept waving his flag at Hood's Texans struggling through Devil's Den and its rocky approaches, to gain the coveted hill. Fortunately for our cause, General Warren, engineer-in-chief of the army, happened to ride up and, seeing the gravity of the situation, got hold of Vincent's Brigade of the Fifth Corps and Hazlitt's Battery. These gained the summit, dragging the guns up by hand, and were just in time to hurl the Texans back in a bloody hand-to-hand struggle. In the meantime Hill had become engaged on the Confederate side and part of the Second Corps and all of the Fifth Corps on ours. General Sedgwick and his chief of staff, Colonel McMahon, had gone to Meade's headquarters for orders. Two of us had purchased some cherry pies of a very freckled faced girl at a neighboring farmhouse, and had just joined the rest of the staff, who were in the shadiest place they could find upon the banks of Rock Creek, and we were all listening with suppressed excitement to a tremendous outburst of cannon and musketry over the hills to the left, when McMahon came riding down the hill swinging his hat and shouting, "The general directs the corps toward the heavy firing." In an instant every man was on his feet. The fences were broken down and the heads of the brigades broke off into the fields and began ascending the long slopes toward the Round Tops, nearly a

mile away. Captain Farrar and I were with the first brigade to arrive (Colonel Nevins'), and we all helped to swing it into line and it moved gallantly over the crest. General Sedgwick sent us in with it and as we went over the crest the round shot whistled very close, and we passed over what seemed to be fragments of the Fifth Corps, passed General Sykes commanding it, and on into the smoke beyond at the double-quick down to a stone wall at the right and foot of Little Round Top and opened a rousing fire. The attack of the enemy in front reminded me then of the last wave on the beach, stopping and being pushed up a little more and a little more from behind. I was on the right of the brigade and rode across behind it where I saw the boulders piled on the top of Little Round Top and started to ride up there to see what I could. I had to ride fast across the front of Pennsylvania Reserves, who were making a charge that looked like the picture of a battle, and it looked as if it were on me. Then my active little horse, forgetting his seventy-mile ride, took me up the steep northwest side of Little Round Top to where Hazlitt's guns were still firing, though their commander was dead and the rocks seemed to be covered with corpses in light blue Zouave uniform. I afterwards learned that they were the 140th New York. On looking back I could see no enemy firing except by Devil's Den and in the valley, and I was told by an officer ensconced behind a boulder, that I had better get out of that if I did not want to be picked off, and the bullets were flattening themselves against the rocks all about. So, quickly over the hill I went, where I found what was left of the regular brigade under Colonel Greene, and they looked like a small regiment. Speaking to one or two friends, I rode back to General Sedgwick and was glad to rest, for the fighting was over on the left for that day. Our several brigades had been sent as reenforcements to different points so our command was small. Gloomy reports kept coming in, and near dark, Major Whittier, the general's confidential aid, told me we were going to march back twenty miles that night and that the general was going to the headquarters

to a council of war. Before we turned in he came back, and we gladly learned we were to stay where we were. My man then appeared with a blanket and something to eat, and after a soothing pipe, with our saddles for pillows and our overcoats for beds and blankets, we were soon sleeping the dreamless sleep of youth and fatigue.

At daybreak of the third day, General Slocum attacked those of Ewell's Corps who had obtained a lodgment in his lines and with the assistance of two brigades, Neill's and Shaler's of the Sixth Corps, succeeded in driving them out and rectifying his line. After breakfast I went over to the right, passing through the cemetery, and came to Power's Hill where General Slocum had his headquarters. He asked me to stay with him a while as he was short of staff officers, and soon told me to take Neill's Brigade, in which was my regiment, the 7th Maine, over to a hill to the right of our whole line. After a short march we came to the hill, got into line, and advanced toward its wooded summit, but when half-way up were received with a severe fire. The men, however, took the double-quick and soon drove the enemy from the top. They proved to be the advance of Johnson's Division who were working their way round our right and soon would have been on the Baltimore Pike, which would have been in the highest degree disastrous to us. I then rode back to General Slocum to report, and then back to General Sedgwick near Little Round Top.

It was becoming exceedingly hot and it was very uncertain what was to be done. As it is one of the first duties of a staff officer to get information, I went over to Little Round Top and found I could get to it from one side not exposed to sharpshooters, and near the summit I found a little rocky crest where I could see out all over that part of the field. It was still occupied as a signal station. As the firing began to grow over beyond Devil's Den, I soon saw blue-coated troopers through intervals in the trees, and they were attacking the infantry of the Confederate right. They seemed, from sight and sound, to have penetrated quite a distance into the enemy's lines, but as

the ground became opener it was hard to see them charging over fences and up to the woods only to be destroyed by the deliberate fire of the Southern rifle. This was Farnsworth's celebrated charge in which he fell with glory. Looking on farther to the right there seemed to have been a change in the appearance of the enemy's lines since the day before, and borrowing a glass from the signal officer, I was able to distinguish much moving about of troops and artillery, as well as to count over a hundred guns ranged in a semicircle and seemingly directed toward the center of our line. Many of them were Napoleon guns of polished brass and were glistening in the sun. I could not see ours from where I was and did not know that Hunt had concentrated McGilvery and Hazard and the Artillery Reserve in nearly as formidable an array to reply. About this time Generals Meade and Warren came up on the rocks to take a look, and I dodged back to tell the general that it looked like a cannonade pretty soon. We were all sitting down, somewhere about noontime, with our horses close by and enjoying a simple lunch of hardtack and coffee, when two guns were fired from the enemy's side. I remember we were in a field which had many boulders and some small trees in it. I concluded I did not want any more lunch and got behind a boulder large enough to cover me and my horse; and in a little while it began. Such a cannonade was never heard on the continent of America, one hundred and thirty guns on the Confederate side and eighty upon ours. The rebels seemed to be mostly firing by battery, and ours, one at a time. The open ground behind our line was being torn up in every direction by the shells. Occasionally a caisson exploded, riderless horses were dashing about, and a throng of wounded were streaming to the rear. When the cannonade was at its height and everyone of judgment was utilizing what cover he could find, I saw coming over the plain behind us, which was being beaten into dust in every direction by the enemy's shells, a man with a long beard and spectacles, wearing a brown linen duster. When he got a little nearer, I saw that he was our sutler's clerk and that he

staggered in his gait. As he got pretty near me, a shell shrieked between us with more than usually fiendish noise, and he looked down at me, putting his hand up to his ear, and said, "Listen to the mocking-bird." With the providential good fortune of drunken men, he had crossed for some distance in safety over ground where it seemed impossible for any living thing to remain a minute.

This cannonade lasted about an hour and we all knew that it was intended as the prelude to an infantry attack, but where the attack would be was in doubt, as the Confederate fire did not seem to us to be concentrated on any particular part of our line. That is where they were in error, as the whole of their fire directed on the Second Corps would have given their attack a much better chance. We did not feel very anxious however, as our men were hugging the ground and gripping their muskets in front, and were they not the tried and true that stormed Marye's Heights not long ago, and had never lost a color or a gun to the enemy since they had first marched out from their far Northern homes? Now the fire on our side stopped, but for fifteen minutes yet the one hundred and thirty Confederate guns belched out flame. Hunt, chief of artillery, had ordered our fire to cease that the guns might cool to be ready for the coming assault. The enemy thought that they had silenced our fire, only to be bitterly disappointed a little later. Then suddenly all the firing ceased and there was a lull. The smoke-clouds were rising on the opposite crest, the sunlight again glinting on the long line of brass guns, but what was that gray mass that seemed to be moving, scarce distinguishable from the smoke wreaths about it? In a moment there was little doubt what it was, for on comes the wonderful Virginia infantry of Pickett and beyond the North Carolinians of Pender and Pettigrew and this side the large brigade of Cadmus Wilcox. It was a thrilling sight and I thought of the great charges of the French infantry at Wagram and Austerlitz that I loved to read of in childhood. On they came; it looked to me like three lines about a mile long each, in perfect order. They cross the

Emmitsburg Pike, and our guns, eighty in all, cool and in good order, open first with shot and then with shell. Great gaps are made every second in their ranks, but the gray soldiers closed up to the center and the color-bearers jump to the front shaking and waving the "stars and bars." And so they pass out of my sight for a few minutes as Ziegler's Grove in front of our line shuts them off. But a tremendous roar of musketry crashed out and I know the big guns are firing grape and canister now. And soon they appeared again, and this time the colors are together like a little forest, but the men are dropping like leaves in autumn. They pass our line, thousands of men in gray left yet, and I believe our center is pierced; I could not see that they threw down their arms. So, fast as I could ride, I went down there for information, as I knew the general would want to attack at once with all the Sixth Corps he could lay his hands on. But I soon saw to my great joy that we were victors still, and that the flower of the South had dashed themselves to pieces against the sturdy Second Corps alone. I saw General Armistead, the Confederate leader, dying, and near him Cushing of the regular artillery, who had fired his last gun with one hand, though partly cut in two, holding his body together with the other. Then I tried to ride over the field, but could not for the dead and wounded lay too thick to guide a horse through them. Then it occurred to me that our corps must have orders by this time to make a counter-attack as the thing to do under the circumstances; so I got back again as fast as possible, but was soon sent with a message to General Slocum on the right. While there I heard firing to the north of Gettysburg and rode out beyond our lines to see what it was, and from a hill was fortunate enough to see the defeat of Stuart's Cavalry by Gregg. All it looked like was a dust cloud with flakes of light in it as the sun shone upon the swinging sabers. Lee had ordered his cavalry to attack on our right about the same time as Pickett, and they would have done us vast mischief had they succeeded in beating our cavalry; and had Pickett's charge succeeded, they would have been in a position to have done us similar damage

to the work of the Prussian cavalry at Waterloo. Thus ended the battle of Gettysburg. Lee retreated the next day and though he fought with skill and determination for two years more, there was little doubt of the end when the last of his dauntless columns filed through Monterey Gap on their way to cross the Potomac.

Three years ago I went to Gettysburg to attend a reunion of the Army of the Potomac. It was on the anniversary of the battle. We stayed at a hotel near where General Reynolds was killed. After supper we strolled out and, hearing the cavalry bugle in the woods near by, on investigation found two squadrons of the 4th Regular Cavalry, that had just come East after their arduous campaign against Geronimo. We soon found lots of friends among the officers, and they offered us horses and orderlies to use while there, and finally asked us if we would not like to have them escort us over the field the next day. We were overjoyed and accepted, so the next morning they received us and with buglers ahead we started out. I think this cavalry the finest I have ever seen, better than the English Life Guards, or their crack regiments of Hussars, or the best cavalry in France; and I don't know as it is to be wondered at, for the kind of service the American cavalryman performs and the kind of enemy he has been fighting, tend to produce the highest physical and soldierly qualities in him. We rode over the whole line of battle of the Army of the Potomac for each of the three days of the fight. The positions of most of the regiments are now marked by monuments, many of which are very fine. Mimic guns show where each battery was located, and as far as possible all the features of the field are preserved. We halted to rest in the cemetery, which has for a gateway a wooden imitation of a Roman triumphal arch. I remember that I stopped there on the second day of the battle to see General John Marshall Brown, of Portland, who was then adjutant-general in the Eleventh Corps, and that he went into this archway through a door on the side, and I think they had been using it for a sleeping-room. I went around this arch to look for the place

and found there was no door, and I was troubled for I thought my memory had been playing me false. Soon after, finding the custodian of the place, he told me there was a new archway built like the old one, only the old one had a tool house in the side. When memory retains such trifles for twenty-five years, it argues that nothing is really forgotten or lost that makes an impress, however slight, on the recording portion of our brains. After finishing the Union line we rode over that of the Confederates till we came to the place where Pickett's Division started on its charge. There I had the curiosity to ride slowly over the route of the charge, and it but strengthened the belief I have had ever since witnessing it, that with all its grandeur and bravery, it was badly managed as a military movement. It should have won. More men should have been put into it, at least one division from Ewell, more. Longstreet should have gone with it, and when thousands of the survivors of the charge found themselves within our lines, there was something better for them to do than to throw down their arms. But for all that, the charge of Pickett's Virginians at Gettysburg will always remain one of the most glorious as well as one of the saddest episodes in the history of the war.

There has always been a good deal said since the war to exalt the bravery of the Southern soldiers. They are Americans and we are proud of them ; but the bravery was not all on one side. The best fighting I happened to see was done by Northern soldiers. I refer to one Maine regiment, not mine, and we used to fight each other at one time. Three times they stormed and took fortified works of the Confederates at the point of the bayonet, using the bayonet freely. Each time their losses were more than half their number engaged, and each time they were confronted by equal or greater numbers than their own, of the choicest troops of the Army of Northern Virginia, fighting with desperation on ground of their own selection and behind formidable field fortifications. On one of these occasions the famous Stonewall Division was worsted, and the

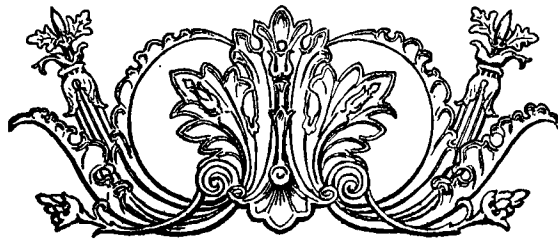
6th Maine Volunteers took more prisoners than they had men engaged. The occasions were the storming of Marye's Heights; the taking of the forts at Rappahannock Station, and Upton's assault at Spotsylvania. I firmly believe that had the long lines of Pickett's glorious charge at Gettysburg been composed of such stubborn material as the old 6th Maine, "the lost cause" might have been triumphant on the green slopes of Cemetery Hill that day.

Gettysburg has sometimes been compared to Waterloo, and while there are points of resemblance, it was very unlike, both in its character and result. The size of the armies was about the same; the losses (about fifty thousand) about the same; but there, it seems to me, the resemblance ceases. Gettysburg was spread over three days; Waterloo was fought in part of one. Both Napoleon and Wellington put every man into the fight; not so Lee and Meade. Waterloo was won by Blucher, a reenforcement, and its result was the destruction of an army and the government behind it; Gettysburg was simply the high-water mark of a rebellion. At Waterloo, light and heavy cavalry stormed over the field; at Gettysburg, the cavalry did noble service but it was miles away. Waterloo was fought for the fortunes of emperors and kings, but men died at Gettysburg to break the fetters from millions of slaves.

And when I stood for the last time in the cemetery at Gettysburg, and gazed on the thousands of graves of the Union dead, the memory of the great statesman and martyr of the war was with me and his words there spoken, which will echo through the ages.

"The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it beyond anything we can do. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to dedicate ourselves to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus so nobly advanced, to consecrate ourselves to the great task remaining and to gather from the

graves of these mourned dead increased devotion to that cause for which they gave their lives. Here let us resolve that they shall not have died in vain ; that this nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish forever from the earth."



THE MILITARY OPERATIONS ON THE WHITE OAK ROAD, VIRGINIA, MARCH 31, 1865.

By Brevet Major-General JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN.

THE operations of the Fifth Corps on the White Oak Road on the 31st of March, 1865, were more serious in purpose and action than has been generally understood ; and with reference either to their intended and possible results, or to their actual effect upon the ensuing eventful campaign, they are entitled to better consideration than they have yet received. Moreover, the peculiar complications attending them, bearing upon the personal issues which made a memorable episode of the battle of Five Forks on the following day, give these incidents a picturesque interest as well as historic value. I have thought that a recital based on personal knowledge of these operations and intimate association with some of the chief actors in them, might tend to draw the facts from the obscurity in which they have been left in official reports and professed histories of the last campaign of the Army of the Potomac ; and while necessarily exhibiting, might perhaps tend to clear up, some of the confusion in which they have been involved by the peculiar circumstances under which this record has been presented to the public judgment.

It had not been the habit in the Fifth Corps to invite or encourage detailed reports on the part of subordinates ; and in the rush and pressure of this intense campaign there was less opportunity or care than ever for such matters, while the impressiveness of the momentous close left little disposition to multiply words upon subordinate parts or participants. The fact also of an early change in the grand tactics of the campaign confused the significance, and sometimes the identity, of important movements ; and the change of commanders in the crisis of its chief battle induced consequences which, even in official reports

and testimony, affected the motive for sharply defining actions where personal concern had come to be an embarrassing factor.

At all events, the immediate reports of those days are meager in the extreme; and very much of what has come out since has been under the disadvantage of being elicited as *ex parte* testimony before military courts where the highest military officers of the government were parties, and the attitudes of plaintiff and defendant almost inevitably biased expression.

It will be distinctly borne in mind that the view here presented is of things as they appeared to us who were concerned in them as subordinate commanders. This is a chapter of experiences,—including in this term not only what was done, but what was known and said and thought and felt, not to say suffered, and showing withal a steadfast purpose, patience and spirit of obedience deserving of record even if without recompense.

In order to throw all possible light on the otherwise inexplicable confusions of this day, I have incorporated with my original account some evidence not before available now brought out in recent volumes of the Records of the War. Such reference to what was not then within our knowledge I have endeavored to make perfectly distinct, so as not to disturb the essential unity of a picture seen from the interior of what may with literal appropriateness be called the *transactions* of that day.

Yet I find embarrassments in approaching this narration. These facts, however simple, cannot but have some bearing on points which have been drawn into controversy on the part of those who were dear to me as commanders and companions in arms, and who have grown still dearer in the intimacies of friendship since the war, and in the fact that they are no longer here to speak for themselves. I feel, therefore, under increased responsibility in presenting these matters, assuring myself that I know of no bias of personality or partisanship which should make me doubtful of my ability to tell the truth as I saw and knew it to be, or distrust my judgment in forming an opinion.

Another embarrassment is in the fact that the operations of this day are closely related parts of a series of movements which,

whether continuous or broken, were intended to be directed towards a distinct objective; so that no one portion can be fully understood without reference to the rest, both before and after, and to the great controlling motive of the whole.

Indulge me, therefore, with your patience while I gather up as shortly as possible, the main preliminaries necessary to a fair understanding of the operations on the White Oak Road. Lee's army during the previous winter had become much weakened by lack of supplies, desertions,¹ and general demoralization of the Confederate cause, and Grant was determined to take decisive measures to break the whole Confederate hold on Virginia. He planned a vigorous movement to cut Lee's communications, and also those of Richmond; and at the same time to turn the right flank of Lee's entrenched line before Petersburg and break up his army. For the first of these objects he was to send Sheridan, now commanding "The Middle Military Division," with the cavalry of the Army of the Shenandoah, two divisions, under General Merritt, and the cavalry division now commanded by General Crook, formerly belonging to the Army of the Potomac. For the second purpose he was to send out, with Sheridan though not under his command, the Fifth and Second Corps of the Army of the Potomac,—General Meade, its commander, accompanying the movement. The former places of these corps on the left of our entrenchments before Petersburg, were to be taken by troops of the Army of the James. On the right of these our Sixth and Ninth Corps were to hold their old positions in front of Petersburg, ready to break through the enemy's works if they should be stripped somewhat of troops by the necessity of meeting our assault on their right.

The scope of Grant's intentions may be understood from an extract from his orders to Sheridan, March 28, 1865:—

"The Fifth Army Corps will move by the Vaughan Road at three A. M. to-morrow morning. The Second moves at about nine A. M.

¹ The desertions in Pickett's Division alone from March 9 to 18 were 512 men. *Rebellion Records*, Serial 97, p. 1332, 1353. And they were shooting deserters at that time. *Ibid.* p. 1367.

Move your cavalry at as early an hour as you can, and passing to or through Dinwiddie, reach the right and rear of the enemy as soon as you can. It is not the intention to attack the enemy in his entrenched position, but to force him out, if possible. Should he come out and attack us, or get himself where he can be attacked, move in with your entire force in your own way, and with full reliance that the army will engage or follow the enemy as circumstances will dictate. I shall be on the field, and will probably be able to communicate with you. Should I not do so, and you find that the enemy keeps within his main entrenched line, you may cut loose and push for the Danville Road. If you find it practicable, I would like you to cross the Southside Road between Petersburg and Burkesville, and destroy it to some extent. After having accomplished the destruction of the two railroads, which are now the only avenues of supply to Lee's Army, you may return to this army or go on into North Carolina and join General Sherman. ."

General Grant evidently intended to rely more on tactics than strategy in this campaign. In his personal letter to General Sherman, of March 22, giving the details of his plans for Sheridan's movement, he adds: "I shall start out with no distinct view, further than holding Lee's forces from following Sheridan. But I shall be along myself, and will take advantage of anything that turns up."

The general plan was that Sherman should work his way up to Burkesville, and thus cut off Lee's communications, and force him to come out of his entrenchments and fight on equal terms. Sherman says he and General Grant expected that one of them would have to fight one more bloody battle. He also makes the characteristic remark that his army at Goldsboro was strong enough to fight Lee's army and Johnston's combined, if Grant would come up within a day or two.¹

¹ Sherman's Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 325. This seems to imply a reflection on the fighting qualities of the Army of the Potomac, as at that time Sherman's army did not exceed in number the Army of the Potomac but by about six thousand men. But it must be remembered that the Army of the Potomac confronted an enemy covered by entrenched works for sixteen miles,—a circumstance which gave the Confederates the great advantage of three to one in effective numbers.

The ground about to be traversed by us is flat and swampy, and cut up by sluggish streams, which, after every rain, become nearly impassable. The soil is a mixture of clay and sand, quite apt in wet weather to take the character of sticky mire or of quicksands. The principal roads for heavy travel have to be corduroyed or overlaid with plank. The streams for the most part find their way southeasterly into the tributaries of the Chowan River. Some, however, flow northeasterly into the waters of the Appomattox. Our available route was along the divide of these waters.

The principal road leading out westerly from Petersburg is the Boydton Plank Road; for the first ten miles nearly parallel with the Appomattox, and distant from it from three to six miles. The Southside Railroad is between the Boydton Road and the river. South of the Boydton is the Vaughan Road; the first section lying in rear of our main entrenchments, but from our extreme left at Hatcher's Run, inclining towards the Boydton Road, being only two miles distant from it at Dinwiddie Court House. Five miles east of this place the Quaker Road, called by persons of another mood, the "Military Road," crosses the Vaughan and leads northerly into the Boydton Road midway between Hatcher's Run and Gravelly Run, which at their junction became Rowanty Creek.

A mile above the intersection of the Quaker Road with the Boydton is the White Oak Road, leading off from the Boydton at right angles westerly, following the ridges between the small streams and branches forming the headwaters of Hatcher's and Gravelly Runs, through and beyond the "Five Forks." This is a meeting-place of roads, the principal of which, called the Ford Road, crosses the White Oak at a right angle, leading from a station on the Southside Railroad, three miles north, to Dinwiddie Court House, six miles south.

The enemy's main line of entrenchments west from Petersburg covers, of course, the important Boydton Plank Road; but only so far as Hatcher's Run, where at Burgess' Mill, their entrenchments leave this and follow the White Oak Road for

some two miles, and then cross it, turning to the north and following the Claiborne Road, which leads to Sutherland station on the Southside Railroad ten miles distant from Petersburg, covering this road till it strikes Hatcher's Run, about a mile higher up. This "return" northerly forms the extreme right of the enemy's entrenched line.

When the instructions for this campaign reached us, all were animated with confidence of quick success. If Lee's lines before Petersburg were held in place, it would be easy work to cut his communications, turn his right, and roll him back upon Petersburg or Richmond; if, on the other hand, his main lines were stripped to resist our attack, our comrades in the old lines would make short work of Lee's entrenchments and his army. We were all good friends,—those who were to constitute the turning column. Humphreys of the Second Corps had formerly commanded a division in the Fifth; Warren of the Fifth had commanded the Second; Miles in the Second had won his spurs in the Fifth; Meade, commanding the army, had been corps commander of the Fifth; the cavalry division of our army, now to go to Sheridan, had been our pet and pride; Sheridan was an object of admiration and awe.

At daylight on the twenty-ninth of March the Fifth Corps moved out toward the enemy's right. As the movement was intended to mask its destination by a considerable detour to the rear, our column first moved southward to Arthur's Swamp, crossing the Rowanty at Monk's Bridge, and thence by way of the Old Stage Road into and down the Vaughan. My brigade, being the advance of the First Division, reached the Chapple House, about two miles from Dinwiddie, early in the forenoon, encountering only a few cavalry pickets. Sheridan, with the cavalry, moving by a still exterior route, reached Dinwiddie Court House only at about five o'clock in the afternoon, pressing before him also the enemy's pickets.

Our whole division¹ had arrived at the Chapple House when

¹ Griffin's Division at the opening of the campaign numbered in all present for duty, of all kinds, 6,547 men. Of these the First Brigade numbered 1,750; the Second, about the same; the Third, upwards of 3,000.

at about noon my command was ordered to retrace its steps by the Vaughan to the Quaker Road, and push up towards the salient of the enemy's works near Burgess' Mill. We soon found this road better entitled to its military than its Quaker appellation. The enemy's skirmishers were pressed back upon their reserves in a fairly well fortified position on the north bank of Gravelly Run, where they had destroyed the bridge to check our advance. Forging the run and forcing the position, we soon developed a strong line which had entrenched itself as an advanced post to cover the important point at Burgess' Mill, consisting of Gracie's, Ransom's, Wallace's and Wise's Brigades, of Bushrod Johnson's Division,¹ under Lieutenant General R. H. Anderson. After stubborn fighting for over two hours, involving a loss to us of one hundred and sixty-seven killed and wounded, including some of our most valued officers, and a much heavier loss to the enemy of whom more than one hundred killed and fifty wounded, with one hundred and sixty prisoners taken by a sudden countercharge, fell into our hands, and aided late in the action by portions of Gregory's and Bartlett's brigades, which had then just arrived, and by Battery B, 4th U. S. artillery, we pushed the enemy quite back to the White Oak Road, and into their entrenchments behind it. The Second Corps now came up and formed on our right.

With customary cognizance of our purposes and plans, Lee had on the twenty-eighth, ordered General Fitz Hugh Lee, with his division of cavalry, from the extreme left of his lines to the extreme right in the vicinity of Five Forks, to oppose what he believed to be Sheridan's intention of cutting his communications by way of the Southside Railroad.² Such despatch had Fitz Lee made that on the evening of the twenty-ninth he had

¹ Reported to be about 6,000 strong. Rebellion Records, Serial 97, page 116.

² Longstreet had advised Lee (March 28) that Grant would try to take Richmond by raiding on his communications rather than by attacking his lines of works, and suggesting putting a sufficient force in the field to prevent this. He says "the greater danger is from keeping too close within our trenches." Rebellion Records, Serial 97, page 1360. This advice was exactly in the line of what Grant desired as his best opportunity. Longstreet's discussion of the situation is interesting as given in "Manassas to Appomattox," page 588.

arrived at Sutherland Station, within six miles of Five Forks, and about that distance from our fight that afternoon on the Quaker Road. Pickett's Division, consisting of the brigades of Stuart, Hunton, Corse and Terry, about five thousand strong, was sent to the entrenchments along the Claiborne Road, and Roberts' Brigade of North Carolina cavalry, to picket the White Oak Road from the Claiborne to Five Forks.

On the thirtieth, the Fifth Corps, relieved by the Second, moved to the left along the Boydton Road, advancing its left towards the right of the enemy's entrenchments on the White Oak Road. Lee, also, apprehensive for his right, sent McGowan's South Carolina Brigade and McRae's North Carolina, of Hill's Corps, to strengthen Bushrod Johnson's Division in the entrenchments there; but took two of Johnson's brigades — Ransom's and Wallace's — with three brigades of Pickett's Division (leaving Hunton's in the entrenchments), to go with Pickett to reenforce Fitz Hugh Lee at Five Forks. W. H. F. Lee's Division of cavalry, about one thousand five hundred men, and Rosser's, about one thousand,¹ were also ordered to Five Forks. These reenforcements did not reach Five Forks until the evening of the thirtieth.

The precise details of these orders and movements were, of course, not known to General Grant nor to any of his subordinates. But enough had been developed on the Quaker Road to lead Grant to change materially his original purpose of making the destruction of the railroads the principal objective of Sheridan's movements. At the close of our fight there, Grant had despatched Sheridan: "Our line is now unbroken from

¹ I leave these figures as I had them from reports at the time. General Fitz Hugh Lee states in his testimony before the Warren Court of Inquiry that his division numbered about 1,300; W. H. F. Lee's, about 1,000; and Rosser's, 900. (Records, page 474.) But General W. H. F. Lee testifying before the same court gives his numbers as between 1,700 and 1,800. (Same, page 530.) His command in ordinary times seems to have been much larger. General Humphreys quotes the morning report of February 20, 1865, showing for W. H. F. Lee's command, 3,935 sabers, and Fitz Lee's, 1,825. (Virginia Campaign, page 434, Appendix L.)

Appomattox to Dinwiddie. I now feel like ending the matter, if possible, before going back. I do not want you, therefore, to cut loose and go after the enemy's roads at present. In the morning push around the enemy, if you can, and get on to his right rear. The movements of the enemy's cavalry may, of course, modify your action. We will act together as one army here, until it is seen what can be done with the enemy."

The effect of this message reached to something more than a measure of tactics. It brought Sheridan at once to Grant. It will be borne in mind that he was not under the orders of Meade, but an independent commander, subject to Grant alone. His original orders contemplated his handling his command as a flying column, independently of others — all the responsibility and all the glory being his own. The new instructions would bring him to act in conjunction with the Army of the Potomac, and render quite probable under army regulations and usages his coming under temporary command of General Meade, his senior in rank,—a position we do not find him in during this campaign. The logic of the new situation involved some interesting corollaries beyond the direct issue of arms.

It was a dark and dismal night, that twenty-ninth of March, on the Quaker Road. The chilling rain poured down, soaking the fields and roads and drenching the men stretched on the ground, worn, wounded and dying, all alike shrouded in ghastly gloom. Here and there with strange, will-o'-the-wisp motion, some ministering lantern sailing and sinking low in its quest of flickering life, shone weirdly through the mist and mirk,—one knew not whether near or far. Before morning the roads were impassable for wagons or artillery, and nearly so for the ambulances that came up ghost-like in the shivering dawn.

Meanwhile, not far in rear of this scene, at General Grant's headquarters, Sheridan was holding long and close conference with him, having ridden up through the rain and mud immediately on receiving the message announcing the change of plan. All that is known of this outside is that at the end Sheridan was directed to gain possession of Five Forks early in the morning.

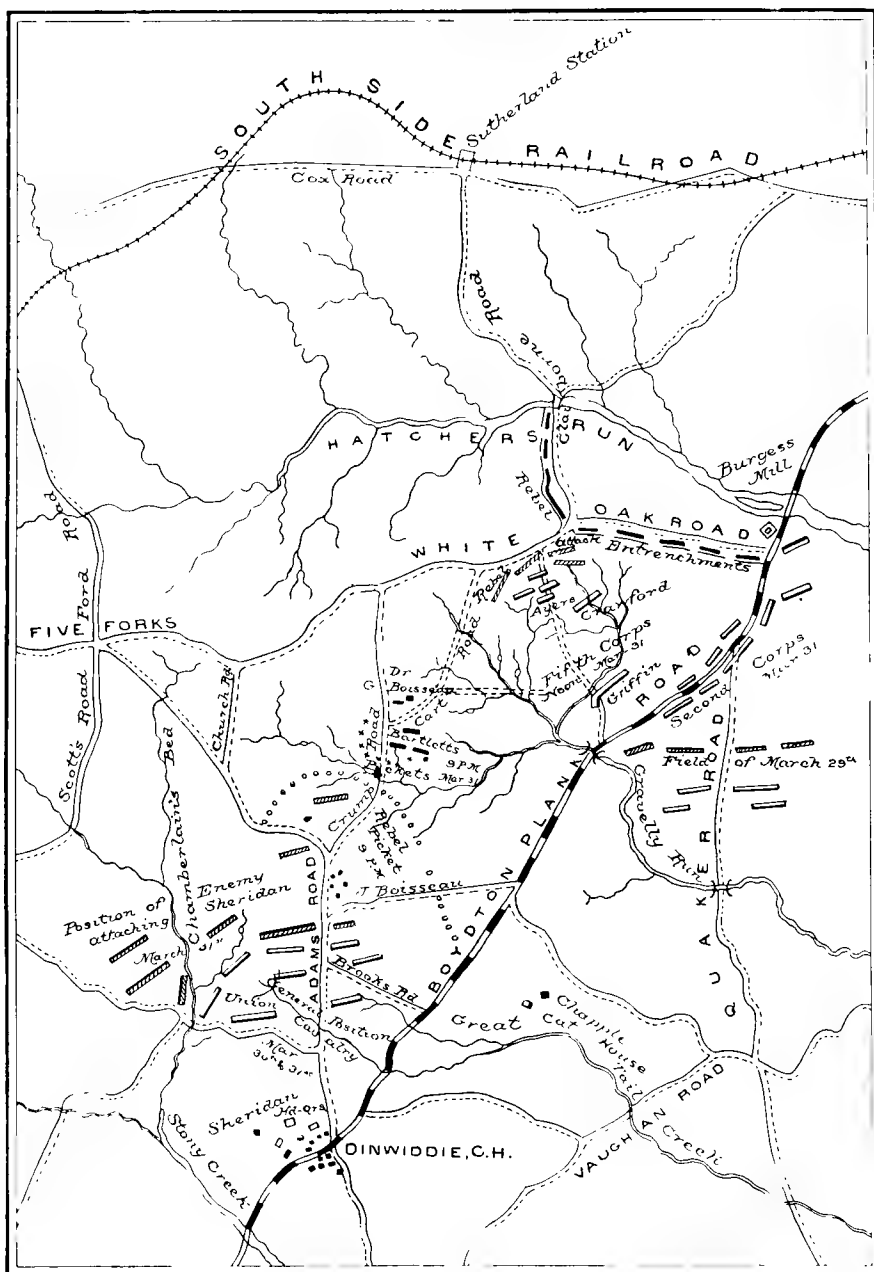
He could easily have taken possession of that before ; for all the afternoon and night of the twenty-ninth, there was nothing to oppose him there but the right wing of Roberts' slender brigade, picketing the White Oak Road. But when he received a positive order to secure that point on the morning of the thirtieth, he seems to have moved so late and moderately that Fitz Hugh Lee had time to march from Sutherland Station to Five Forks, and thence half-way to Dinwiddie Court House to meet him ; and even then, attacking with a single division, although this outnumbered the enemy by a thousand men,¹ he permitted his demonstration on Five Forks, to be turned into a reconnaissance half-way out,² his advance being checked at the forks of the Ford and Boisseau Roads, where it remained all night and until itself attacked the next morning.³ It is true that the roads and fields were heavy with rain ; but this did not prevent our two infantry corps from moving forward and establishing themselves in front of the White Oak Road, in face of considerable opposition ; nor hinder Lee from zealously strengthening the right of his lines, and pressing forward his reinforcements of infantry and cavalry to Fitz Hugh Lee at Five Forks, where they arrived at about sunset. What we cannot understand is why previous to that time General Sheridan, with thirteen thousand cavalry,⁴ had not found it practicable to make an effective demonstration on Five Forks, covered all the morning only by what few men Roberts had there picketing the White Oak Road, and after that time, all day, only by Fitz Hugh Lee with eighteen hundred cavalry.

¹ General Devin's Division numbered, according to returns of March 30, 169 officers and 2,830 men, present for duty.

² General Merritt's despatch of March 30. Rebellion Records : Serial 97, page 326.

³ General Fitz Hugh Lee's testimony. Warren Court Records, Vol. 1, page 469.

⁴ This figure is what was understood by us at the time. General Humphreys, noted for painstaking accuracy, says in his " Virginia Campaign of 1864 and '65 " the numbers of Sheridan's cavalry present for duty March 31, 1865 were 611 officers and 13,200 enlisted men. (Appendix, p. 433.) The official returns for that month, as compiled from subordinate returns, show for Sheridan's cavalry, exclusive of artillery, present for duty,



WHITE OAK ROAD, MARCH 31, 1865.

To avoid confusion, the position of the 5th Corps troops across the White Oak Road, near the Claiborne, at 5 P. M. is not shown.

Early on the morning of the thirty-first the Fifth Corps had all advanced northerly beyond the Boydton Road towards the enemy at the junction of the White Oak and Claiborne Roads : Ayres, with the Second Division, in advance, about six hundred yards from this junction ; Crawford, with the Third Division, on Ayres' right rear in echelon with him, about six hundred yards distant ; and Griffin, with the First Division, in position about thirteen hundred yards in rear of a prolongation of Crawford's line to the left, entirely out of sight of both, owing to woods and broken ground, but within what was thought to be supporting distance. This position was along the southeast bank of a swampy branch of Gravelly Run, half a mile north of the Boydton Road, and a mile and a half south of the White Oak Road. Miles' Division of the Second Corps had extended to the left on the Boydton Road to connect with Griffin.

My command was the extreme left of our lines ; my own brigade along the difficult branch of Gravelly Run, facing towards Ayres, with Gregory's Brigade (which had reported to me for this campaign) "refused" — bent back at right angles so as to face westerly — along a country road leading from the Boydton to the Claiborne Road ; a portion of the artillery of the division being placed also in my lines to strengthen the defense of that flank, where we had reason to believe the enemy, after

Merritt's command, 373 officers ; 7,138 men, = 7,511

Crook's Division, 210 officers ; 5,625 men, = 5,835

Totals: 583 " 12,763 " 13,346

(Rebellion Records, Serial 97, p. 391.)

For the month of April 1865 the official returns show for the above :

Merritt's command, 400 officers, 7,894 men, = 8,294

Crook's command, 220 officers, 2,715 men, = 2,935

Totals: 620 " 10,609 " 11,229

(Rebellion Records, Serial 97, p. 1043.)

In a paper presented before the Warren Court of Inquiry, understood to be a copy of General Sheridan's official report, he states the number of his effective command at the opening of this campaign to be: Merritt's command 5,700, and Crook's command, 3,300; a total of 9,000. He may have had in mind the effective numbers when dismounted; a fourth of the men being kept back holding horses.

their old fashion, were very likely to make a dash upon our left while we were maneuvering to turn their right.

General Grant, understanding from General Sheridan that he was on the White Oak Road, near Five Forks, on the afternoon of the thirtieth, had replied to him that his position on this road was of very great importance, and concluded this answer with these words: "Can you not push up towards Burgess' Mills on the White Oak Road?"¹

General Grant's wishes, as now understood, were that we should gain possession of the White Oak Road in our front. This was indicated in a despatch from him March 30, to General Meade, the purport of which was known to us and had much to do with shaping our energies for action. The despatch was the following:

"As Warren and Humphreys advance, thus shortening their line, I think the former had better move by the left flank as far as he can stretch out with safety, and cover the White Oak Road if he can. This will enable Sheridan to reach the Southside Road by Ford's Road, and, it may be, double the enemy up, so as to drive him out of his works south of Hatcher's Run."

In accordance with this understanding, Ayres had made a careful examination of the situation in his front, upon the results of which General Warren had reported to Generals Meade and Grant that he believed he could, with his whole corps, gain possession of the White Oak Road. This proposition was made in face of the information of Grant's order of 7.40 this morning, that owing to the heavy rains the troops were to remain substantially as they were, but that three days' more rations should be issued to the Fifth Corps; an intimation of a possible cutting loose from our base of supplies for a time.

Griffin's Division, being entrusted with a double duty — that of guarding the exposed left flank of the Fifth and Second

¹ Sheridan's despatch to Grant, March 30, 2.45 P. M., and Grant's reply thereto; Records, Warren Court of Inquiry, Vol. II, page 1309. It afterwards transpired that Sheridan's cavalry did not long hold this position. Grant's despatch to Meade, March 31, Rebellion Records, Serial 97, p. 339.

Corps, and that of being in readiness to render prompt assistance in case of trouble arising from the demonstrations against the White Oak Road front — our adjustments had to be made for what in familiar speech is termed a “ticklish situation.” Vague rumors from the direction of Five Forks added to what we knew of the general probabilities, justified us in considerable anxiety. There was a queer expression of Griffin’s face when he showed me a copy of a message from Grant to Sheridan, late the evening before, which gave us the comical satisfaction of knowing that our inward fears had good outside support. This was what we thus enjoyed: “From the information I have sent you of Warren’s position, you will see that he is in danger of being attacked in the morning. If such occurs, be prepared to push up with all your force to assist him.” The morning had now come. It is needless to remark that there was no lethargy in the minds of any on that left flank of ours, in a situation so critical, whether for attack or defense.

It may seem strange that in such a state of things Warren should have made the suggestion for a movement to his front. But he was anxious, as were all his subordinates, to strike a blow in the line of our main business; which was to turn Lee’s right and break up his army. Wet and worn and famished as all were, we were alive to the thought that promptness and vigor of action would at all events determine the conditions and chances of the campaign. And if this movement did not involve the immediate turning of Lee’s right in his entrenchments, it would secure the White Oak Road to the west of them, which Grant had assured Sheridan was of so much importance, and would enable us to hold Lee’s right in check, so that Sheridan could either advance on the White Oak Road towards us and Burgess’ Mill, as Grant had asked him to do, or make a dash on the Southside Railroad, and cut their communications and turn their right by a wider sweep, as Grant had also suggested to him to do.

Late in the forenoon Warren received through General Webb, chief of staff, the following order: “General Meade directs that

should you determine by your reconnoissance that you can gain possession of, and hold the White Oak Road, you are to do so, notwithstanding the order to suspend operations to-day." This gave a sudden turn to dreams. In that humiliation, fasting and prayer, visions arose like prophecy of old. We felt the swing and sweep; we saw the enemy turned front and flank across the White Oak Road; Sheridan flashing on our wheeling flank, cutting communications, enfilading the Claiborne entrenchments; our Second Corps over the main works, followed up by our troops in the old lines seizing the supreme moment to smash in the Petersburg defenses, scatter or capture all that was left there of Lee's army, and sweep away every menace to the old flag between us and the James River. Mirage and glamor of boyish fancy, measuring things by its heart! Day dreams of men familiar with disaster, drenched and famished, but building, as ever, castles of their souls above the level river of death!

It was with mingled feelings of mortification, apprehension and desperation, that in the very ecstasy of these visions, word came to us of Sheridan's latest despatch to Grant the evening before, that Pickett's Division of infantry was deployed along the White Oak Road, his right reaching to Five Forks; and the whole rebel cavalry was massing at that place, so that Sheridan would be held in check by them instead of dashing up, as was his wont, to give a cyclone edge to our wheeling flank. Grant's despatch to Meade, transmitting this, was a dire disenchantment. The knell rang thus: "From this despatch Warren will not have the cavalry support on his left flank that I expected. He must watch closely his left flank."

Although Grant had given out word that there should be no movement of troops that day, Lee seems not so to have resolved. Driven to seize every advantage or desperate expedient, he had ordered four brigades, those of Wise, Gracie and Hunton, with McGowan's South Carolina Brigade, to move out from their entrenchments, get across the flank of the Fifth Corps and smash it in. We did not know this, but it was the very situation

which Grant had made the occasion for attacking ourselves. It was a strange coincidence, but it was to both parties a surprise.

This was the condition of things and of minds when the advance ordered for the White Oak Road was put into execution. Ayres advanced, soldier-like, as was his nature; resolute, firm-hearted, fearing nothing; in truth not fearing quite enough. Although he believed his advance would bring on a battle, he moved without skirmishers, but in a wedge-like formation guarding both flanks. His First Brigade, commanded by the gallant Winthrop, had the lead in line of battle, his right and rear supported by the Third Brigade, that of Gwyn, who was accounted a good fighter; and Denison's Maryland Brigade formed in column on Winthrop's left and rear, ready to face outward by the left flank in case of need; while a brigade of Crawford's was held in reserve in rear of the center. This would seem to be a prudent and strong formation of Ayres' command. The enemy's onset was swift and the encounter sudden. The blow fell without warning, enveloping Ayres' complete front. It appears that McGowan's Brigade struck squarely on Winthrop's left flank, with an oblique fire also on the Maryland Brigade, while the rest of the attacking forces struck on his front and right. General Hunton¹ says they were not expecting to strike our troops so soon and that the attack was not made by usual orders, but that on discovering our advance so close upon them, a gallant lieutenant in his brigade sprung in front of his line, waving his sword with the shout, "Follow me, boys;" whereupon all three brigades on their right dashed forward to the charge. Winthrop was overwhelmed and his supports demoralized. All he could hope for was to retire in good order. This he exerted himself to effect. But this is not an easy thing to do when once the retreat is started before a spirited foe superior in numbers, or in the flush and rush of success. In vain the gallant Denison strove to stem the torrent. A disabling wound struck down his brave example, and the effect of this shows how much the moral forces have to do in sustaining

¹ Records, Warren Court, p. 623.

the physical. Brigade after brigade broke; that strange impulse termed a "panic" took effect and the retreat became a rout.

Ayres, like a roaring lion, endeavors to check the disorder, and make a stand on each favoring crest and wooded ravine. But in vain. His men stream past him. They come back on Crawford's veteran division and burst through it in spite of all the indignant Kellogg can do, involving this also in the demoralization; and the whole crowd comes back reckless of everything but to get behind the lines on the Boydton Road, plunging through the swampy run, breaking through Griffin's right, where he and Bartlett reform them behind the Third Brigade. The enemy pursuing, swarm down the bank opposite us, and are met by a sharp fire of musketry and artillery which we had made ready on hearing the noise of the retreat. We were expecting them to fall in force on our left in Gregory's front, and I was riding along that line, anxious about this, when General Warren and General Griffin came down at full speed, both out of breath with their efforts to rally the panic-stricken men whose honor was their own, and evidently under great stress of feeling. Griffin breaks forth first, after his high-proof fashion: "General Chamberlain, the Fifth Corps is eternally damned!" I essayed some pleasantry: "Not till you are in heaven!" Griffin does not smile nor hear, but keeps right on: "I tell Warren you will wipe out this disgrace, and that's what we're here for." Then Warren breaks out, with stirring phrase, but uttered as if in a delirium of fever: "General Chamberlain, will you save the honor of the Fifth Corps? That's all there is about it." That appeal demanded a chivalrous response. Honor is a mighty sentiment, and the Fifth Corps was dear to me. But my answer was not up to the keynote: I confess that. I was expecting every moment an attack on my left flank now that the enemy had disclosed our situation. And my little brigade had taken the brunt of things thus far; but the day before the last, winning a hard-fought field from which they had come off grievously thinned and torn and

worn, and whence I had but hardly brought myself away. I mentioned Bartlett, who had our largest and best brigade, which had been but little engaged. "We have come to you; you know what that means," was the only answer. "I'll try it, General; only don't let anybody stop me except the enemy!" I had reason for that protest as things had been going. "I will have a bridge ready here in less than an hour. You can't get men through this swamp in any kind of order," says Warren. "It may do to come back on, General; it will not do to stop for that now. My men will go straight through." So at a word the First Battalion of the 198th Pennsylvania, Major Glenn, commanding, plunges into the muddy branch, waist deep, and more,¹ with cartridge boxes borne upon the bayonet sockets above the turbid waters; the Second Battalion keeping the banks beyond clear of the enemy by their well-directed fire, until the First has formed in skirmishing order and pressed up the bank. I followed with the rest of the brigade in line of battle and Gregory's in column of regiments. The enemy fell back without much resistance until finding supports on broken strong ground, they made stand after stand. Griffin followed with Bartlett's Brigade, in reserve. In due time Ayres' troops got across and followed up on our left rear, while Crawford was somewhere to our right and rear, but out of sight or reach after we had once cleared the bank of the stream. It seems that General Warren sent to General Meade the following despatch: "I am going to send forward a brigade from my left, supported by all I can get of Crawford and Ayres, and attack. This will take place about 1.45, if the enemy does not attack sooner." This was the only recognition or record we were to have in official reports; it was not all we were to achieve in unwritten history.

At about this time Miles, of the Second Corps, had after the fashion of that corps gone in handsomely in his front, somewhat to the right of our division, and pressed so far out as to flank

¹ General Warren states in his testimony before the Court of Inquiry that this stream was sixty feet wide and four or five feet deep. Records, page 717.

Wise's Brigade on the left of the troops that had attacked Ayres, and drove them back half-way to their starting-point. This had the effect to induce the enemy in my front to retire their line to a favorable position on the crest of a ravine where they made another determined stand. After sharp fighting here we drove them across an extensive field into some works they seemed to have had already prepared, of the usual sort in field operations,—logs and earth,—from which they delivered a severe fire which caused the right of my line to waver. Taking advantage of the slight shelter of a crest in the open field I was preparing for a final charge, when I received an order to halt my command and defend my position as best I could. I did not like this much. It was a hard place to stay in. The officer who brought me the order had his horse shot under him as he delivered it. I rode back to see what the order meant. I found General Griffin and General Warren in the edge of the woods overlooking the field, and reported my plans. We had already more than recovered the ground taken and lost by the Second and Third Divisions. The Fifth Corps had been rapidly and completely vindicated, and the question was now of taking the White Oak Road, which had been the object of so much wishing, and worrying. It was evident that things could not remain as they were. The enemy would soon attack and drive me back. And it would cost many men even to try to withdraw from such a position. The enemy's main works were directly on my right flank, and how the intervening woods might be utilized to cover an assault on that flank, none of us knew. I proposed to put Gregory's Brigade into those woods, by battalion in echelon by the left, by which formation he would take in flank and reverse in succession any attacks on my right. When Gregory should be well advanced I would charge the works across the field with my own brigade. My plan being approved, I instructed Gregory to keep in the woods, moving forward with an inclination towards his left to keep him closed in toward me, and at the same time to open the intervals in his echelons so that he would be free to deliver a strong fire on his

own front if necessary ; and the moment he struck any opposition to open at once with full volleys and make all the demonstration he could, and I would seize that moment to make a dash at the works in my front. Had I known of the fact that General Lee himself was personally directing affairs in our front,¹ I might not have been so rash, or thought myself so cool.

Riding forward I informed my officers of my purpose and had their warm support. Soon the roar of Gregory's guns rose in the woods like a whirlwind. We sounded bugles "Forward," and that way we go ; mounted officers leading their commands ; pieces at the right shoulder until at close quarters.

What we had to do could not be done by firing. This was foot-and-hand business. We went with a rush ; not minding ranks nor alignments ; but with open front to lessen loss from the long-range rifles. Within effective range, — about three hundred yards,— the sharp, cutting fire made us reel and shiver. Now, quick or never ! On and over ! The impetuous 185th New York rolls over the enemy's right, and seems to swallow it up ; the 198th Pennsylvania, with its fourteen companies, half veterans, half soldiers "born so," swing in upon their left striking Hunton's Brigade in front ; and for a few minutes there is a seething wave of countercurrents, then rolling back leaving a fringe of wrecks, and all is over. We pour over the works ; on across the White Oak Road ; swing to the right and drive the enemy into their entrenchments along the Claiborne road, and then establish ourselves across the road facing northeast, and take breath.²

Major Woodward in his history of the 198th Pennsylvania giving a graphic outline of the last dash, closes with an incident I had not recorded. "Only for a moment," he says, "did the sudden and terrible blast of death cause the right of the line to waver. On they dashed, every color flying, officers leading,

¹ Testimony of General Hunton and General McGowan ; Warren Court Records, Vol. I, page 625 and 648.

² General Hunton, since Senator from Virginia, said in his testimony before the Warren Court, speaking of this charge, "I thought it was one of the most gallant things I had ever seen." Records, Part I, page 625.

right in among the enemy, leaping the breastworks,— a confused struggle of firing, cutting, thrusting, a tremendous surge of force, both moral and physical, on the enemy's breaking lines,— and the works were carried. Private Augustus Zieber captured the flag of the 46th Virginia in mounting one of the parapets, and handed it to General Chamberlain in the midst of the *mêlée*, who immediately gave it back to him, telling him to keep it and take the credit that belonged to him. Almost that entire regiment was captured at the same time." It scarcely need be added that the man who captured that battle flag was sent with it in person to General Warren, and that he received a medal of honor from the Government.

In due time Gregory came up out of the woods his face beaming with satisfaction at the result to which his solid work, so faithfully performed, had been essential. His brigade was placed in line along the White Oak Road on our right, and a picket thrown out close up to the enemy's works. This movement had taken three hours, and was almost a continuous fight, with several crescendo passages, and a final cadence of wild, chromatic sweeps settling into the steady key-note, thrilling with the chords of its unwritten overtones and undertones. It had cost us a hundred men, but this was all too great, of men like these,—and for oblivion. It was to cost us something more,—a sense of fruitlessness and thanklessness.

It seems that in the black moment, when our two divisions were coming back in confusion, Meade had asked Grant to have Sheridan strike the attacking force on their right and rear, as he had been ordered to do in case Warren was attacked. For we have Grant's message to Meade, sent at 12.40, which is evidently a reply: "It will take so long to communicate with Sheridan that he cannot be brought to cooperation unless he comes up in obedience to orders sent him last night. I understood General Forsyth to say that as soon as another division of cavalry got up, he would send it forward. It may be there now. I will send to him again, at once."

So far, to all appearance, all was well. The Fifth Corps was across the White Oak Road. General Grant's wish that we should extend our left across this road as near to the enemy as possible, so that Sheridan could double up the enemy and drive him north of Hatcher's Run, had been literally fulfilled. It had cost us three days' hard work and hard fighting, and more than two thousand men. It had disclosed vital points. General Grant's notice of all this as given in his *Memoirs* (Vol. II, page 435), representing all these movements as subordinated to those of General Sheridan is the following: "There was considerable fighting in taking up these new positions for the Second and Fifth Corps, in which the Army of the James had also to participate somewhat, and the losses were quite severe. This is what was known as the battle of the White Oak Road."¹

The understanding of this affair has been confused by the impression that it was the Second Corps troops which attacked and drove back the forces of the enemy that had driven in the Second and Third Divisions of the Fifth Corps. In the complicated rush and momentous consummation of the campaign, and particularly in the singular history of the Fifth Corps for those days, in which corps and division and brigade commanders were changed, there was no one specially charged with the care of seeing to it that the movements of this corps in relation to other corps were properly reported as to the important points of time as well as of place. General Miles, doubtless, supposed he was attacking the same troops that had repulsed

¹ When the very assault we were in the act of making, or rather, of following up, on the enemy's right on the thirty-first of March, was triumphantly taken up by General Miles on the second of April, after the disaster at Five Forks had called away most of the defenders of the Claiborne entrenchments,—Generals Anderson and Johnson, with Hunton's, Wise's, Gracie's and Fulton's Brigades being of the number,—and the whole rebel army was demoralized, General Grant, now free to appreciate such action, despatches General Meade at once: "Miles has made a big thing of it, and deserves the highest praise for the pertinacity with which he stuck to the enemy until he wrung from him victory." Verily, something besides circumstances can "alter cases."

part of the Fifth Corps. He moved promptly when Griffin, with infantry and artillery was checking the onrushing enemy now close upon our front; and attacking in his own front,—that of the Second Corps,—fought his way valiantly close up to the enemy's works in that part of their line. Miles reported to Humphreys that he was "ahead of the Fifth Corps," which subsequently bore off to the left of him and left a wide interval. This expression must not be understood as direction in a right line. It is used rather as related to the angular distance between the Boydton and the White Oak Roads,—this being less where Miles was, on the right, and widening by a large angle towards the left, where the Fifth Corps was. It is as one line is ahead of another when advanced in echelon; or as a ship tacking to windward with another is said to be "ahead" of the latter when she is on the weather beam of it. Miles did not come in contact with a single regiment that had attacked the Fifth Corps. He struck quite to the right of us all, attacking in his own front. But it got into the reports otherwise, and "went up." Grant accepted it as given; and so it has got into history, and never can be got out. General Miles did not get ahead of the Fifth Corps that day, but he came up gallantly on its flank and rendered it great assistance by turning the flank of General Wise and keeping the enemy from massing on our front. He reports the capture of the flag of the 47th Alabama, a regiment of Law's old brigade of Longstreet's Corps, which was nowhere near the front of the Fifth Corps on this day.

In the investigations before the Court of Inquiry, General Warren felt under the necessity of excusing himself from the responsibility of the disastrous results of Ayres' advance on the morning of the thirty-first. He is at pains to show that he did not intend an attack there, although he had suggested the probable success of such a movement.¹ What then was this advance? Surely not to create a diversion in favor of Sheridan before Dinwiddie. At all events, there was an endeavor to get

¹ Records, Warren Court, Part II, page 1525.

possession of the White Oak Road. And that could not be done without bringing on a battle, as Ayres said he knew, beforehand,¹ and afterwards knew still better, and we also, unmistakably. Warren stated his intention correctly, no doubt ; but then was he aware as he should be, of the condition of things in Ayres' front ?

But, however this may have been, when Ayres' advance was repulsed, why was it felt necessary to recover that field and " the honor of the Fifth Corps ?" Unless it was the intention to take forcible possession of the White Oak Road, the recovery of that field was not a tactical necessity, but only,—if I may so speak,—a sentimental necessity. And there was no more dishonor in this reconnaissance,—if it was only that,—being driven back than for Sheridan's reconnaissance toward Five Forks to be driven back upon Dinwiddie, for his conduct in which he received only praise. It is evident that General Grant thought an attack was somehow involved ; for hearing of Ayres' repulse, he blames General Warren for not attacking with his whole corps, and asks General Meade, " What is to prevent him from pitching in with his whole corps and attacking before giving him time to entrench or retire in good order to his old entrenchments ?" This is exactly what was done, before receiving this suggestion ; but it did not elicit approval, or even notice, from Grant or Meade, or Warren. As things turned, Warren was put under a strong motive to ignore this episode ; and as for Grant, he had other interests in mind.

In our innocence we thought we had gained a great advantage. We had the White Oak Road, and were across it, and as near to the enemy as possible, according to Grant's wish. Now we were ready for the consummate stroke, the achievement of the object for which all this toil and trial had been undergone. It needed but little more. The splendid Second Corps was on our right, close up to the enemy's works. We were more than ready. If only Sheridan with but a single division of our cavalry could disengage himself from his occupation before

¹ Testimony, Warren Court, Part I, page 247.

Dinwiddie, so far away to our rear, and now so far off from any strategic point where he had first been placed for the purpose of raiding upon the Danville and Southside Railroads,—which objective had been distinctly given up in orders by General Grant,— if with his audacity and insistence Sheridan could have placed himself in position to obey Grant's order, and come to Warren's assistance when he was attacked, should dash up between us and Five Forks, we would have swiftly inaugurated the beginning of the end,— Grant's main wish and purpose latest expressed to Sheridan, of ending matters here, before he went back. But another, and by far minor objective interposed. Instead of the cavalry coming to help us complete our victories at the front, we were to go to the rescue of Sheridan at the rear.

Little did we dream that on the evening of the thirtieth Grant had formed the intention of detaching the Fifth Corps to operate with Sheridan in turning the enemy's right. This was consistent, however, with the understanding in the midnight conference on the twenty-ninth. The proposition to Sheridan was this : " If your situation in the morning is such as to justify the belief that you can turn the enemy's right with the assistance of a corps of infantry entirely detached from the balance of the army, I will so detach the Fifth Corps and place the whole under your command for the operation. Let me know early in the morning as you can your judgment in the matter, and I will make the necessary orders. " Precisely what Warren had proposed to do at that very time on Gravelly Run, only Sheridan would not have been in chief command. His assistance had however been promised to Warren in case he was attacked. Sheridan replies to this on the morning of the thirty-first. " If the ground would permit, I believe I could with the Sixth Corps, turn the enemy's left, or break through his lines ; but I would not like the Fifth Corps to make such an attempt." By " turning the enemy's right," and " breaking through his lines," he meant only the isolated position at Five Forks, where for the two days past there was nothing to prevent

his handling them alone, and easily cutting the Southside Railroad. Fortunately for our cause, Lee was so little like himself as to allow the detachment of a considerable portion of his infantry from the entrenchments on the evening of the thirtieth to reenforce this position,—for the sake, probably of covering the Southside Road ; to which however, this was not the only key.

Asking for the Sixth Corps shows a characteristic concentration of self-consciousness and disregard of the material elements of the situation wholly unlike the habits of our commanders in the Army of the Potomac. The Sixth Corps was away on the right center of our lines,—even beyond Ord with the Army of the James, and the roads were impracticable for a rapid movement like that demanded. Grant's predilection for his forceful and brilliant cavalry commander could not overcome the material difficulty of moving the Sixth Corps from its place in the main line before Petersburg : he could only offer him the Fifth. And Meade, with meekness quite suggestive of a newly regenerate nature, seems to have offered no objection to this distraction from the main objective, and this inauguration of proceedings which repeatedly broke his army into detachments serving under other commanders, and whereby in the popular prestige and final honors of the campaign, the commander of the Army of the Potomac found himself subordinated to the cavalry commander of the newly made "Middle Military Division."

So while Warren was begging to be permitted to take his corps through fields sodden saddle-girt deep with rain and mire, and get across the right of Lee's entrenched position, the purpose had already been formed of sending him and his corps to try to force the enemy from the position where they were gathering for a stand after having forced his cavalry back upon its base at the Boisseau Cross Road, and holding his main body inactive at Dinwiddie a whole day through. And after Warren had accomplished all that he had undertaken in accordance with the expressed wishes of his superiors, this purpose was to be put into execution.

I do not know that Warren was then aware of General Grant's loss of interest in this movement for the White Oak Road since the new plan for Sheridan and the Fifth Corps. Let us recall: at eight o'clock on the evening before, Meade had sent Grant a despatch from Warren, suggesting this movement. Meade forwarded it to Grant, with the remark: "I think his suggestion the best thing we can do under existing circumstances;—that is, let Humphreys relieve Griffin, and let Warren move on to the White Oak Road, and endeavor to turn the enemy's right." To this Grant replied at 8.35, "It will just suit what I intended to propose; to let Humphreys relieve Griffin's Division, and let that move further to the left. Warren should get himself strong to-night. Orders being sent out accordingly, and reported by Meade, General Grant replies late that evening: "Your orders to Warren are right. I do not expect him to advance in the morning. I supposed, however, that he was now up to the White Oak Road. If he is not, I do not want him to move up without further orders."¹ Meade replies: "He will not be allowed to advance unless you so direct."²

It is impossible to think that Warren knew of this last word of Grant on the subject of the White Oak Road; but as we read it now, it throws light on many things then "dark." It was consistent with Grant's new purpose; but it must have perplexed Meade. And at the turn things took,—and men also,—during the next forenoon and midday, what must have been the vexation in Grant's imperturbable mind, and the ebullition of the few unsanctified remnants in Meade's strained and restrained spirit, those who knew them can freely imagine.

And as for Warren, when all this light broke upon him, in the midst of his own hardly corrected reverses, into what sullen depths his spirit must have been cast, to find himself liable to a suit for breach of promise for going out to a clandestine

¹ Records, Warren Court, Vol. II. p. 1242.

² This is to be compared with Meade's order of 10.30 A. M., March 31, through General Webb: see ante, p. 220.

meeting with Robert Lee, when he was already engaged to Philip Sheridan!

A new anxiety now arose. Just as we had got settled in our position on the White Oak Road, heavy firing was heard from the direction of Sheridan's supposed position. This attracted eager attention on our part; as with that open flank, Sheridan's movements were all important to us. At my headquarters we had dismounted, but had not ventured yet to slacken girths. I was standing on a little eminence, wrapped in thoughts of the declining day and of these heavy waves of sound, which doubtless had some message for us, soon or sometime, when Warren came up with anxious earnestness of manner, and asked me what I thought of this firing,—whether it was nearing or receding. I believed it was receding towards Dinwiddie; that was what had deepened my thoughts. Testing the opinion by all tokens known to us, Warren came to the same conclusion. He then for a few minutes discussed the situation and the question of possible duty for us in the absence of orders. I expressed the opinion that Grant was looking out for Sheridan, and if help were needed, he would be more likely to send Miles than us, as he well knew we were at a critical point, and one important for his further plans as we understood them, especially as Lee was known to be personally directing affairs in our front. However, I thought it quite probable that we should be blamed for not going to the support of Sheridan even without orders, when we believed the enemy had got the advantage of him. "Well, will you go?" Warren asked. "Certainly, General, if you think it best; but surely you do not want to abandon this position." At this point, General Griffin came up and Warren asked him to send Bartlett's Brigade at once to threaten the rear of the enemy then pressing upon Sheridan. That took away our best brigade. Bartlett was an experienced and capable officer, and the hazardous and trying task he had in hand would be well done.

Just after sunset Warren came out again, and we crept on our hands and knees out to our extreme picket within two hundred

yards of the enemy's works, near the angle of the Claiborne Road. There was some stir on our picket line, and the enemy opened with musketry and artillery, which gave us all the information we wanted. That salient was well fortified. The artillery was protected by embrasures and little lunettes, so that they could get a slant and cross-fire on any movement we should make within their range.

I then began to put my troops into bivouac for the night, and extended my picket around my left and rear to the White Oak Road, where it joined the right of Ayres' picket line. It was an anxious night along that front. The darkness that deepened around and over us was not much heavier than that which shrouded our minds, and to some degree shadowed our spirits. We did not know what was to come, or go. We were alert,—Gregory and I,—on the picket line nearly all the night through. Griffin came up to us at frequent intervals, wide awake as we were.

In the meantime many things had been going on, and going back. It came to us now, in the middle of the night, that Sheridan had been attacked by Fitz Hugh Lee and Pickett's infantry, and driven pell-mell into Dinwiddie. He could hardly hold himself there. The polarities of things were reversed. Instead of admitting the Fifth Corps to the contemplated honor of turning Lee's right, or breaking through his lines, between Dinwiddie and Five Forks, orders and entreaties came fast and thick, in every sense of these terms, for the Fifth Corps to leave the White Oak Road, Lee's company, and everything else, and rush back five miles to the rear, floundering through the mire and dark, to help Sheridan stay where Pickett and Fitz Hugh Lee had put him. Indeed, the suggestive information had leaked out from Grant's headquarters that Sheridan might be expected to retreat by way of the Vaughan Road, quite to the rear of our entire left. This would leave all the forces that had routed Sheridan at perfect liberty to fall upon our exposed flank, and catch the Fifth Corps to be bandied to and fro between them and the enemy in their fortifications, near

at hand. By the time the Fifth Corps began to be picked to pieces by divisions and brigades, and finally made a shuttlecock as an entire organization, the situation of things and of persons had very much changed.

At 6.30 P. M. General Warren received an order to send a brigade to Sheridan's relief by threatening the rear of the enemy then in his front. Soon other orders followed,—the last of these being to send the brigade by the Boydton Road. This would have been quite a different matter. But Bartlett had already been gone an hour when this order came, and to the Crump Road, reaching this by aid of a cart track through woods and mire. Of course, Warren could not recall Bartlett. But to comply as nearly as possible with the order, he at once directed General Pearson, who with three of Bartlett's regiments was guarding the trains on the Boydton Road, to move immediately down towards Dinwiddie. Pearson got to the crossing of the main stream of Gravelly Run, and finding that the bridge was gone, and the stream not fordable, halted for orders. But things were crowding thick and fast. Pearson's orders were countermanded, and orders came from army headquarters for Griffin's Division to go.

On the news of Sheridan's discomfiture, Grant seems first to have thought of Warren's predicament. In a despatch to Meade early in the evening he says: "I would much rather have Warren back on the Plank Road than to be attacked front and rear where he is. He should entrench, front and rear of his left, at least, and be ready to make a good fight of it if he is attacked in the morning. We will make no offensive movement ourselves to-morrow."

That was on the evening before the battle of Five Forks!

This was a significant despatch ; showing among other things Grant's intention of holding on, if possible, for the present at least, to the White Oak Road, at the Claiborne salient ; for that was where our two advanced brigades of the Fifth Corps were holding. This evidence has not been well appreciated by those who have formed their judgment, or written the history, of

those three days' battles. And Meade had been trying all day to get up entrenching tools and implements for making the roads passable for wheels. A thousand men had been working at this for the two days past.

At 8.30 came the notice,—communicated confidentially, I remember,—that the whole army was going to contract its lines. At nine o'clock came an order from Grant to Meade: "Let Warren draw back at once to his position on the Boydton Road, and send a division of infantry to Sheridan's relief. The troops to Sheridan should start at once, and go down the Boydton Road." Meade promptly sent orders for the corps to retire, and for Griffin to go to Sheridan, and go at once.

Apparently nobody at general headquarters seems to have remembered two incidents concerning the selection of Griffin's Division for this movement; first, that Bartlett of this division was already by this time down upon the enemy's rear, by another, more direct, though more difficult road, and in a far more effective position for the main purpose than could be reached by the Boydton; and secondly, that the two remaining brigades of this division were with me on and across the White Oak Road,—the farthest off from the Boydton Road, and most impeded by difficult ground, of any troops remaining on our lines. Another circumstance, forgotten or ignored, was that the bridge at the Plank Road crossing of Gravelly Run was gone,¹ and that the stream was not fordable for infantry. Warren, in reporting his proceeding to comply with the order, reported also the destruction of the bridge and his intention to repair it; but this seems somehow from first to last, to have added to the impatience felt towards him at those headquarters.

Grant had experienced a sudden change of mind,—a complete and decided one. His imperative order now received meant giving up entirely the position we had just been ordered

¹ Colonel Theodore Lyman, aid-de-camp on the staff of General Meade, wrote in his diary on the night of March 30, "Roads reduced to a hopeless pudding. Gravelly Run swollen to treble its usual size, and Hatcher's Run swept away its bridges and required pontoons." Records, Warren Court of Inquiry, Vol. I, p. 519.

to entrench, across the hard-won White Oak Road. Within ten minutes from the receipt of this order, Warren directed his division commanders to gather up their pickets and all outlying troops, and take their position on the Boydton Road. Griffin was directed to recall Bartlett and then move down the Plank Road and report to Sheridan. But as it would take time for Griffin to get his scattered division together and draw back through the mud and darkness to the Boydton Road, ready to start for Sheridan, Warren, anxious to fulfil the spirit and object of the order, rather than render a mechanical obedience to the letter of it, sends his nearest division, under Ayres, the strong, stern old soldier of the Mexican war, to start at once for Sheridan. Meantime, the divisions of Griffin and Crawford were taking steps to obey the order to mass on the Boydton Road. For my own part, I did not move a man ; wishing to give my men all possible time for rest, until Bartlett should arrive, who must come past my rear.

This was the situation when at half past ten in the evening came an order throwing everything into a complete muddle. It was from Meade to Warren : " Send Griffin promptly as ordered by the Boydton Plank Road, but move the balance of your command by the road Bartlett is on, and strike the enemy in rear, who is between him and Dinwiddie. Should the enemy turn on you, your line of retreat will be by J. M. Brooks' and R. Boisseau's on Boydton Road. You must be very prompt in this movement, and get the forks of the road at Brooks' so as to open to Boisseau's. Don't encumber yourself with anything that will impede your progress, or prevent your moving in any direction across the country." The grim humor of the last suggestion was probably lost on Warren, in his present distraction. " Moving in any direction " in the blackness of darkness across that country of swamps and sloughs and quicksands, would be a comedy with the savage forces of nature and of man in pantomime, and a spectacle for the laughter of the gods. Nor was there much left to encumber ourselves with,—more especially in the incident of food. Grant had been very anxious

about rations for us ever since early morning, when he had said that although there were to be no movements that day, the Fifth Corps must be supplied with three days' rations more. But all the day no rations had been got up. Indeed, I do not know how they could have found us, or got to us if they had. Grant had repeated imperative orders to Meade to spare no exertions in getting rations forward to the Fifth Corps ; whereupon Meade, who had himself eaten salt with his old Fifth Corps, gave orders to get rations to us anyway ;—if not possible for trains, then by pack-mules. The fortunate and picturesque conjuncture was that some few rations were thus got up by the flexible and fitting donkey-train, while we were floundering and plunging from every direction for our rendezvous on the Boydton Road or elsewhere, just at that witching hour of the night when the flying cross-shuttle of oscillating military orders was weaving such a web of movements between the unsubstantial footing of earth and the more substantial blackness of the midnight sky, matched only by the benighted mind.

By this order the Corps was to be turned end for end, and inside out. Poor Warren might be forgiven if at such an order his head swam and his wits collapsed. He responds thus,—and has been much blamed for it by those under canvas, then and since ;—“ I issued my orders on General Webb's first despatch to fall back ; which made the divisions retire in the order of Ayres, Crawford, and Griffin, which was the order they could most rapidly move in. I cannot change them to-night without producing confusion that will render all my operations nugatory. I will now send General Ayres to General Sheridan, and take General Griffin and General Crawford to move against the enemy, as this last despatch directs I should. I cannot accomplish the object of the orders I have received.¹ ”

But what inconceivable addition to the confusion came in the following despatch from General Meade to Warren at one o'clock

¹ See this despatch of 10.55 P. M. March 31st. War Records, Serial 97, p. 367. General Warren in his testimony before the Court of Inquiry, claimed that the word “ Otherwise ” should be prefixed to the last sentence of this order, as it was dictated. Records, page 730, note.

at night : " Would not time be gained by sending troops by the Quaker Road ? Sheridan cannot maintain himself at Dinwiddie without reenforcements, and yours are the only ones that can be sent. Use every exertion to get the troops to him as soon as possible. If necessary, send troops by both roads, and give up the rear attack."

Rapidly changing plans and movements in effecting the single purpose for which battle is delivered are what a soldier must expect ; and the ability to form them wisely and promptly illustrates and tests military capacity. But the conditions in this case rendered the execution of these peculiarly perplexing. Orders had to pass through many hands ; and in the difficulties of delivery, owing to distance and the nature of the ground, the situation which called for them had often entirely changed. Hence some discretion as to details in executing a definite purpose must be accorded to subordinate commanders.

Look for a moment at a summary of the orders Warren received that evening, after we had reached the White Oak Road, affecting his command in detail.

1. To send a brigade to menace the enemy's rear before Sheridan.

But he had already of his own accord sent Bartlett's Brigade, of Griffin's Division, the nearest troops, by the nearest way.

2. To send this brigade by the Boydton Road instead of the Crump.

This was a very different direction, and of different tactical effect. But impossible to recall Bartlett, Warren sent Pearson, already on the Boydton Road, with a detachment of Bartlett's Brigade.

3. To send Griffin's Division by the Boydton Road to Sheridan, and draw back the whole corps to that road.

Griffin's Division being widely and far scattered, and impossible to be collected for hours, Warren sends Ayres' Division, nearest, and most disengaged.

4. To send Ayres and Crawford by the way Bartlett had gone, and insisting on Griffin's going by Boydton Road.

This would cause Ayres and Bartlett to exchange places, crossing each other in a long, difficult and needless march.

5. Ayres having gone, according to Warren's orders, Griffin and Crawford to go by Bartlett's way.

But Griffin had sent for Bartlett to withdraw from his position and join the division ready to mass on the Boydton Road.

It is difficult to keep a clear head in trying to see into this muddle now : we can imagine the state of Warren's mind. But this was not all. Within the space of two hours, Warren received orders involving important movements for his entire corps, in four different directions. These came in rapid succession, and in the following order :

1. To entrench where he was (on the White Oak Road), and be ready for a fight in the morning. (This from Grant.)

2. To fall back with the whole corps from the White Oak Road to the Boydton, and send a division by this road to relieve Sheridan. (This from Grant.)

3. Griffin to be pushed down the Boydton Road, but the rest of the corps — Ayres and Crawford,— to go across the fields to the Crump Road, the way Bartlett had gone, and attack the enemy in rear who were opposing Sheridan. (This from Meade.)

This required a movement in precisely the opposite direction from that indicated in the preceding order,— which was now partly executed. Ayres had already started.

4. Meade's advice to send these troops by the Quaker Road, (ten miles around), and give up the rear attack.

5. To these may be added the actual final movement, which was that Ayres went down the Boydton Road, and Griffin and Crawford went by the "dirt" road across the country to the Crump Road as indicated in Meade's previous orders.

There is one thing more. General Grant thought it necessary, in order to make sure that Sheridan should have complete and absolute command of these troops,— to send a special message asking Meade to make that distinct announcement to Sheridan. (Despatch of 10.34 P M., March 31.) To this Meade replies that he had ordered the Fifth Corps to Sheridan, and

adds, "The messenger to Sheridan has gone now, so that I cannot add what you desire about his taking command, but I take it for granted he will do so, as he is senior. I will instruct Warren to report to him."

So General Grant's solicitude lest Sheridan should forget to assume command, as the regulations clearly provided, was faithfully ministered to by that expert in nervous diseases,—Meade.

The orders which came to General Warren that night were to an amazing degree confused and conflicting. This is charging no blame on any particular person. We will call it, if you please, the fault of circumstances. But of course, the responsibility for the evil effects of such conditions must naturally, in military usage and ethics, rest upon the officer receiving them. And when he is not allowed to use his judgment as to the details of his own command, it makes it very hard for him, sometimes. Indeed it is not very pleasant to be a subordinate officer ; especially if one is also at the same time, a commanding officer.

But in this case I think the trouble was the result of other recognizable contributory circumstances,—if I might not say, causes.

1. The awkwardness of having in the field so many superior, or rather coordinate commanders : Grant, commanding the the United States Armies, with his headquarters immediately with those of the commander of the Army of the Potomac ; unintentionally but necessarily detracting from the dignity and independence of, this subordinate ; Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac, only two corps of which were with him, —the two others being on the extreme right of our entrenched lines, with Ord and the Army of the James between them ; Sheridan, with an independent cavalry command, guaranteed so to remain, yet in such touch with the Fifth Corps that there was danger of more friction than support between the commanders.¹

¹ How serious the practical effect was of having orders or despatches on the same point from several superior or coequal commanders, is brought out by General Sheridan's answers under close and almost "cross" examination at the

2. A double objective : one point being Sheridan's independent operations to cut the enemy's communications ; the other, the turning of Lee's right and breaking up his army by our infantry. It is true this double objective was in terms given up when Sheridan was informed all were to "act together as one army ;" but the trouble is, this precept was never strictly carried into effect ; inasmuch as General Sheridan was not inclined to serve under any other commander but Grant, and it became difficult to humor him in this without embarrassing other operations. And, as matter of fact, the communications were not cut, either on the Southside or the Danville Roads, until our infantry struck them,— Sheridan, however, contributing in his own way to this result.

3. These supreme commanders being at such distance from the fields of operation on the thirty-first of March, that it was impossible to have a complete mutual understanding when orders were to be put into effect. Nor could they make themselves alike familiar with material conditions, such as grounds and bridges, or with the existing state of things at important junctures, owing to rapid, unforeseen changes.

4. Time lost, and sequence confused, by the difficulty of getting over the ground to carry orders, or to obey them ; owing to the condition of the roads, or lack of them, and the extreme darkness of the night.

We had very able officers of the general staff, at each headquarters ; otherwise things might have been worse. The responsibilities, labors, tests and perils,— physical and moral,— that

Warren Court of Inquiry. See Records, pages 64-73. As to the embarrassments experienced by General Meade in giving orders to his subordinates, and by General Warren in handling his own corps, an example is seen in the following note to General Sheridan by General Webb, chief of Meade's staff, on the evening of March 31. Consider especially the last sentence.

"Gen. Meade has directed all the spare ambulances he can get hold of to go down to Dinwiddie. Bartlett's Brigade is at Crump's house, on Gravelly Run. Griffin, with three brigades, is ordered down Boydton Plank, to attack in rear of force menacing you. Gen. Grant is requested to authorize the sending of Warren's two other divisions down the dirt road past Crump's, to hold and cover that road, and to attack at daylight."

Thus the Fifth Corps had three immediate commanders to order its divisions.

often fall upon staff officers in the field, are great and trying. Upon their intelligence, alertness, accuracy of observation and report, their promptitude, energy and endurance, the fate of a corps or a field, may depend.

The frictions, mischances and misunderstandings of all these circumstances falling across Warren's path, might well have bewildered the brightest mind, and rendered nugatory the most faithful intentions.

Meantime, it may well be conceived we who held that extreme front line had an anxious night. Griffin was with me most of the time, and in investigating the state of things in front of our picket lines some time after midnight, we discovered that the enemy were carefully putting out their fires all along their own visible front. Griffin regards this as evidence of a contemplated attack on us, and he sends this information and suggestion to headquarters, and thus adds a new element to the already well-shaken mixture of uncertainty and seeming cross-purposes. But with us, the chief result was an anxiety that forbade a moment's relaxation from intense vigilance.

Meantime Ayres had kept on, according to Warren's first orders to him, getting a small instalment of rations on the way, and arriving at Warren's "Bridge of Sighs" on the Gravelly Run, just as it was ready, at about two o'clock in the morning, whence he pushed down the Plank Road and reported to Sheridan before Dinwiddie just as the day was dawning. Whereupon he was informed that he advanced two miles further than General Sheridan desired, and he had to face about his exhausted men and go back to a cross road which he had passed for the very sufficient reason that Sheridan had no staff-officer there to guide him where he was wanted.

At three o'clock I had got in my pickets, which were replaced by Crawford's, and let my men rest as quietly as possible, knowing there would be heavy burdens laid on them in the morning. For, while dividing the sporadic mule-rations, word came to us that the Fifth Corps, as an organization, was to report to Sheridan at once and be placed under his orders. We kept our

heads and hearts as well as we could ; for we thought both would be needed. It was near daylight when my command,—all there was of Griffin's Division then left on the front,—drew out from the White Oak Road ; Crawford's Division replacing us, to be brought off carefully under Warren's eye. We shortly picked up Bartlett's returning brigade, halted, way-worn and jaded with marching and countermarching, and struck off in the direction of the Boisseau houses and the Crump Road, following their heavy tracks in the mud and mire marking a way where before there was none ; one of those recommended "directions across the country," which this veteran brigade found itself thus compelled to travel for the third time in lieu of rest or rations, churning the sloughs and quicksands with emotions and expressions that could be conjectured only by a veteran of the Old Testament dispensation.

I moved with much caution in approaching doubtful vicinities, throwing forward an advance-guard, which as we expected to encounter the enemy in force, I held immediately in my own hand. Griffin followed at the head of my leading brigade, ready for whatever should happen. Arrived at the banks of the south branch of Gravelly Run, where Bartlett had made his dispositions the night before, from a mile in our front the glitter of advancing cavalry caught my eye, saber-scabbards and belt-brasses flashing back the level rays of the rising sun. Believing this to be nothing else than the rebel cavalry we expected to find somewhere before us, we made dispositions for instant attack. But the steady on-coming soon revealed the blue of our own cavalry, with Sheridan's weird battle-flag in the van. I reduce my front, get into the road again, and hardly less anxious than before move forward to meet Sheridan.

We come face to face. The sunlight helps out the expression of each a little. I salute : "I report to you, General, with the head of Griffin's Division." The courteous recognition is given. Then, the stern word, more charge than question : "Why did you not come before ? Where is Warren ?" "He is at the rear of the column, sir." "That is where I expected to

find him. What is he doing there?" "General, we are withdrawing from the White Oak Road, where we fought all day. General Warren is bringing off his last division, expecting an attack." Griffin comes up. My responsibility is at an end. I feel better. I am directed to mass my troops by the roadside. We are not sorry for that. Ayres soon comes up on the Brooks Road. Crawford arrives at length, and masses his troops also, near the J. Boisseau house, at the junction of the Five Forks Road. We were on the ground the enemy had occupied the evening before. It was Bartlett's outstretched line in their rear, magnified by the magic lens of night into the semblance of the whole Fifth Corps right upon them, which induced them to withdraw from Sheridan's front and fall back upon Five Forks.¹ So after all Bartlett had as good as fought a successful battle, by a movement which might have been praised as Napoleonic had other fortunes favored.

We cannot wonder that Sheridan might not be in the best of humor that morning. It is not pleasant for a temperament like his to experience the contradiction of having the ardent expectations of himself and his superior turned into disaster and retreat. It was but natural that he should be incensed against Warren. For not deeply impressed with the recollection that he had found himself unable to go to the assistance of Warren as he had been ordered to do, his mind retained the irritation of vainly expecting assistance from Warren the moment he desired it, without considering what Warren might have on hand at the same time. Nor could Warren be expected to be in a very exuberant mood after such a day and night. Hence the auguries for the cup of loving-kindness on this crowning day of Five Forks were not favorable. Each of them was under the shadow of yesterday: one, of a mortifying repulse; the other, of thankless success. Were Warren a mind-reader he would have known it was a time to put on a warmer manner towards Sheridan. For a voice of doom was in the air.

¹ Testimony of Gen. Fitz Hugh Lee, Warren Court, Vol. I, p. 481.

That morning, two hours after the head of the Fifth Corps column had reported to General Sheridan, an officer of the artillery staff had occasion to find where the Fifth Corps was,—evidently not knowing that under orders from superiors it had been like “all Gaul” divided into three parts, if not four quarters,—and went for that purpose to the point where Warren had had his headquarters the night before. Warren, in leaving at daybreak, had not removed his headquarters’ material; but in consideration for his staff, who had been on severe duty all night, told Colonel Locke, Captain Melcher and a few others to stay and take a little rest before resuming the tasking duties of the coming day. It was about nine o’clock in the morning when the artillery officer reached Warren’s old headquarters, and suddenly rousing Colonel Locke asked where the Fifth Corps was. Locke, so abruptly wakened, his sound sleep bridging the break of his last night’s consciousness, rubbed his eyes, and with dazed simplicity answered that when he went to sleep the Fifth Corps was halted to build a bridge at Gravelly Run on the Plank Road. No time was lost in reporting this at headquarters, without making further inquiries as to the whereabouts of the Fifth Corps,—now for three hours with Sheridan on the Five Forks Road. Thereupon General Grant forthwith sends General Babcock to tell General Sheridan that “if he had any reason to be dissatisfied with General Warren,” or as it has since been put, “if in his opinion the interests of the service gave occasion for it,” he might relieve him from command of his corps.¹

“So do we walk amidst the precipices of our fate.”

¹ Records, Warren Court; testimony of Capt. Warner, page 38; of General Babcock, page 901; also of General Sheridan, page 93; and General Grant, page 1028.

General Grant afterwards stated that although this information about the bridge was the occasion, it was not the reason, of his authorization of General Sheridan to depose General Warren from his command. Ibid, page 1030.

That bridge,—for a non-existent one,—had a strange potency. Considering how various were the tests of which it was made the instrument, it well rivals that other “*pons asinorum*” of Euclid; and certainly the associated triangle was of surpassing attributes; for the squares described on the two “legs” of it were far more than equal to that so laboriously executed on its hypotenuse.

All was left to Sheridan's judgment and feeling. The power was his. Still one must justify himself in the exercise of rights and powers. We too must realize the situation. Sheridan, with his habit of intense, concentrated purpose, and indomitable, virile will, was indispensable to Grant in the field. None other of the commanders reminded us of Attila, king of the Huns. Warren, with his bright mind, analytic rather than synthetic, seeing things in their details, quick to seize a situation, yet lacking that tornado force that sweeps only the path before it, was scarcely suited to wield the thunderbolt of Sheridan. He was a good fighter; but he thought of too many things.

General Warren has been blamed, and perhaps justly, for attacking with a single division on the White Oak Road. As he denies that he intended this for an attack, we will put it that he is blamed for not sufficiently supporting a reconnaissance; so that the repulse of it involved the disorderly retreat of two divisions of his corps. It is to be said to this that he very shortly more than recovered this ground, driving the enemy with serious loss into his works. But at the worst, was that a fault hitherto unknown among corps or army commanders? Sheridan attacked with a single division when he was ordered to take Five Forks on the day before, and was driven back by a very inferior force to that he had in hand. He was not blamed, although the result of this failure was the next day's dire misfortunes. And on this very day, driven back discomfited into Dinwiddie, he was not blamed; he was praised,—and in this high fashion. General Grant in his official report and subsequent histories speaking of this repulse says: "Here General Sheridan displayed great generalship. Instead of retreating with his whole command on the main army, to tell the story of superior forces encountered, he deployed his cavalry on foot, leaving only mounted men enough to take charge of the horses. This compelled the enemy to deploy over a vast extent of wooded and broken country and made his progress slow."

If Warren had the benefit of this definition of great generalship, he might have known better what to do on the White Oak

Road. Perhaps also Pickett and Fitz Hugh Lee might have profited by this implied rebuke for allowing themselves to be so "bluffed," and "compelled to deploy," instead of following their old fashion of concentrating on a vulnerable point and launching javelin-like through their enemy's lines. Perhaps, however, they had a wise diffidence of so exhibiting themselves before our stalwart dismounted cavalry, having a well grounded opinion also that our cavalry breech-loaders, Spencers and repeaters were quite a match for the unwieldy muzzle-loading Richmond or Springfield rifles, and that for all purposes except running, a man on two legs is better than a man on four

Warren was deposed from his command at Five Forks mainly, I have no doubt, under the irritation at his being slow in getting up to Sheridan the night before from the White Oak Road. But he was working and fighting all day to hold the advanced left flank of Grant's chosen position, and harrassed all night with conflicting and stultifying orders, while held between two threatening forces; his left with nothing to prevent Lee's choice troops disengaged from Sheridan from striking it a crushing blow; and on the other hand, Lee himself in person, evidently regarding this the vital point, with all the troops he could gather there, ready to deliver on that little front a mortal stroke. For it is not true as has been stated by high authority, that any troops that had fought us on the White Oak Road had gone to Pickett's support at Five Forks that day. And when in the gray of the morning he moved out to receive Sheridan's not over-gracious welcome to the Fifth Corps, Warren withdrew from under the very eyes of Lee, his rear division faced by the rear rank, ready for the not-improbable attack, himself the last to leave the field that might have been so glorious,—now fated to be forgotten.

It may be presumption to offer opinions on the operations of that day under such commanders. But having ventured some statements of fact that seem like criticism, it may be required of me to suggest what better could have been done, or to show reason why what was done was not the best. I submit therefore, the following remarks:

1. Five Forks should have been occupied on the thirtieth as Grant had ordered, and when there was nothing formidable to oppose. The cavalry could then easily strike the Southside Railroad, and the Fifth and Second Corps be extended to envelope the entire right of the enemy's position, and at the opportune moment the general assault could be successfully made, as Grant had contemplated when he formed his purpose of acting as one army with all his forces in the field.

2. This plan failing, there were two openings promising good results; one, to let the cavalry linger about Dinwiddie and threaten Lee's communications, so as to draw out a large body of his troops from the entrenchments into the open where they could be attacked on equal ground, and his army be at least materially crippled; the other, to direct the assault immediately on the right of Lee's entrenched lines on the Fifth Corps front,—the cavalry, of course, sweeping around their flank so as to take them in reverse, while the infantry concentrated on their weakest point.

A third thing was to do a little of both;—and this is what we seem to have adopted, playing from one to the other, fitfully and indecisively, more than one day and night.

Beyond doubt it was Grant's plan when he formed his new purpose on the night of the twenty-ninth, to turn the enemy on their Claiborne flank, and follow this up sharply by vigorous assault on the weakest point of their main line in front of Petersburg. The positions taken up by the Fifth and Second Corps are explained by such a purpose, and the trying tasks and hard fighting required of them for the first three days are therein justified. The evidence of this purpose is ample.¹

¹ As evidence that a general attack was intended, we may cite the order suspending it. It is from Grant to Meade, received by the latter at about one o'clock in the morning of the thirty-first. "I think it has now got to be so late for getting out orders, that it would be doubtful whether Wright could be fully cooperated with by all parts of the army if he was to assault as he proposes. You might notify him to arrange his preliminaries and see if Parke can get ready also; and if so, give him definite orders as soon as it is known. I will telegraph to Ord and ascertain if he can get ready. Warren and Humphreys would have nothing to do but to push forward where they are." But a later order to

Everything was made ready, but the attack was suspended. I am not upon the inquiry whether this was postponed until Sheridan should have done something; my point is that if, or when, this purpose was abandoned for another line of action, other dispositions should have been promptly made, and information given to officers charged with responsibilities and environed with difficulties as Warren was, so that they could catch the change of key. Grant had set the machinery in motion for the White Oak Road, and it was hard and slow work to reverse it when he suddenly changed his tactics, and resolved to concentrate on Sheridan. Why was the Fifth Corps advanced after Ayres' repulse? The "reconnaissance" had been made; the enemy's position and strength ascertained, and our party had returned to the main line. There was no justification in pressing so hard on that point of the White Oak Road, at such costs, unless we meant to follow up this attack to distinct and final results. This may possibly be laid to Warren's charge in his anxiety and agony to "save the honor of the Fifth Corps." But this was not essential to the grander tactics of the field. I sometimes blame myself,—if I may presume to exalt myself into such high company,—for going beyond the actual recovery of Ayres' lost field, and pressing on for the White Oak Road, when it was not readily permitted me to do so. It may be that my too youthful impetuosity about the White Oak Road got Warren into this false position across this road, where all night, possessed with seven devils, we tried to get down to Sheridan and Five Forks. But I verily believed that what we wanted was the enemy's right, on the White Oak Road. How could we then know Grant's change of purpose? However, it was all a mistake if we were going to abandon everything before morning. We should have been withdrawn at once, and put in position for the new demonstration. That order to mass on the

Meade reads: "You may notify Parke and Wright that they need not assault in the morning. I have pretty much made up my mind what to do, and will inform you in the morning what it is." *Rebellion Records*, Serial 97, pages 285, 286, and following. But the understanding of these orders is made difficult by their not being arranged in the order of their delivery.

Boydton Road, received at about ten o'clock at night, should have been given much earlier,—as soon as we could safely move away from the presence of the enemy,—if we were to reenforce Sheridan on his own lines.

3. But better than this, as things were, it would have been to leave a small force on the White Oak Road to occupy the enemy's attention, and move the whole Fifth Corps to attack the rear of the enemy then confronting Sheridan, as Meade suggested to Grant at ten o'clock at night.¹ It would have been as easy for us all to go, as for Bartlett. With such force we would not have stopped on Gravelly Run, but would have struck Pickett's and Fitz Hugh Lee's rear, and compelled them to make a bivouac under our supervision, on that ground where they had "deployed." They would not have been able to retire in the morning, as they were constrained to do by Bartlett's demonstration.

4. No doubt it was right to save the honor of the cavalry before Dinwiddie, as of the Fifth Corps before the White Oak Road; and Sheridan's withdrawal to that place having lured out so large a force,—six thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry,—from a good military position to the exposed one at Five Forks, it was good tactics to fall upon them and smash them up. Lee, strangely enough, did not think we would do this; for he held himself in his main lines on his right, as the point requiring his presence; and sent reenforcements from there for his imperiled detachment only so late that they did not report until after the struggle at Five Forks was all over.

But we owe much to fortune. Had the enemy on the thirty-first let Fitz Hugh Lee with his cavalry reenforcements occupy Sheridan, and rushed Pickett's division with the two brigades of Johnson's down the White Oak Road upon the flank of the momentarily demoralized Fifth Corps, while Hunton and Gracie and Wallace and Wise were on its front, we should have had trouble. Or had they, after repulsing Sheridan towards evening, left the cavalry deployed across his front to baffle his

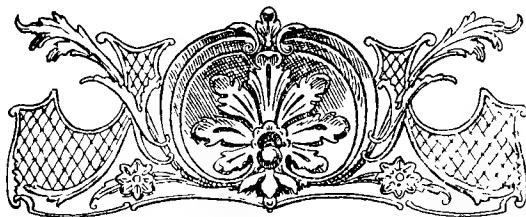
¹ Records, Warren Court, p. 1251.

observation, while Pickett should make the converse movement on us to ours on him with Bartlett's Brigade, and come across from that Crump Road to fall upon our untenable flank position, it would have opened all eyes to the weakness and error of our whole situation. What would have become of us, some higher power than any there only could say.

The battle of Five Forks was also the battle of the White Oak Road, on an extended front, in an accidental and isolated position, and at a delayed hour. It was successful, owing to the character of the troops, and the skill and vigor of the commander. Appomattox was a glorious result of strong pushing and hard marching. But both could have been forestalled, and all that fighting, together with that at Sailor's Creek, High Bridge and Farmville have been concentrated in one grand assault, of which the sharp-edged line along the White Oak Road would have been one blade of the shears, and Ord and Wright and Parke on the main line the other, and the hard and costly ten days' chase and struggle would have been spared so many noble men. Lee would not have got a day's start of us in the desperate race. Sheridan cutting the enemy's communications and rolling up their scattering fugitives would have shown his great qualities, and won conspicuous, though not supreme honors. Warren would have shared the glories of his corps. Humphreys and Wright with their veterans of the Second and Sixth, whose superb action compelled the first flag of truce contemplating Lee's surrender, would not have stood idly around the headquarters' flag of the Army of the Potomac, with Longstreet's right wing brought to bay before them, waiting till Lee's final answer to Grant should come through Sheridan to the Fifth Corps front, where Ord, of the Army of the James, commanded. And Meade, the high-born gentleman and high-borne soldier, would have been spared the slight of being held back with the main body of his army, while the laurels were bestowed by chance or choice, which had been so fairly won by that old army in long years of heroic patience in well-doing and suffering; — might have been spared the after humiliation of experiencing in his

own person how fortune and favor preside in the final distribution of honors in a Country's recognition.

So we leave again,—the Fifth Corps and the White Oak Road. But it was by one of those strange overrulings of Providence, or what some might call poetic justice, and some the irony of history, that it befell Sheridan to have with him at Five Forks and at Appomattox Court House,—not slow nor inconspicuous,—the rejected old Fifth Corps.



DARKEST HOUR.

By Brevet Brigadier-General CHARLES HAMLIN.

EVERYBODY is more or less superstitious. However unwilling we may be to confess it, there are times when we cannot resist superstition, but yield to its sway. Examples from daily life are innumerable, beginning with the days of the emperor who could not endure the presence of a cat in the same room, and coming down to these days when the last guest finds that he makes up the unwelcome thirteenth at the table and politely refuses to remain. The farmer who sees the new moon over his left shoulder, and the sailor who will not set sail from port on Friday, are common illustrations.

Without combating this common trait or endeavoring to reason away its cause, arising so largely as it does through illogical deductions from seeming coincidences, let me tell you of an instance in my own experience.

If any one can claim the right to be superstitious about a play at the theater, I claim to be of the number. Three times I have purchased tickets for "*Our American Cousin*," desiring to see Sothorn in it, but I have never seen it. The sickness of a star actor compelled a change in the title rôle the first time; I was called away out of town the second time; and the assassination of President Lincoln abruptly terminated the third time, under such circumstances, conditions and tragical surroundings that I call that night the "*darkest hour*."

The winter of 1865 found me on duty with Major-General A. P. Howe, inspector of artillery, with headquarters in Washington. He also had command of Camp Barry, which was an artillery depot for instructing, equipping and repairing batteries of artillery.

On that fatal night, accompanied by my wife and sister, I went somewhat early to Ford's Theater, both to hear the

patriotic music of the orchestra and to witness the entrance of the President, who had accepted an invitation to witness the play, with a party of invited guests.

We obtained seats only a few steps behind the orchestra on the side next the box, second tier, assigned to the Presidential party,—being on your right as you enter the auditorium. We found the theater already well filled; the front of the boxes beautifully decorated with flags. The orchestra lost no time to express the loyal joy of the jubilant throng in soul-stirring passages, comprising choice selections of all the national airs. These airs were repeated at the request of the audience which did not seem impatient for the curtain to rise. Then followed a long interval of silence. The illustrious guest of the evening had not arrived. Whispers ran round the house that he would not come, and finally the manager yielded to the calls and the curtain slowly rung up and the play began. The first act, however, was only fairly beginning when it was suspended with a loud outburst of “Hail to the Chief,” by the orchestra, in welcoming with the cheers of the audience,—all standing up,—the much-expected President, who modestly bowed as he quietly moved along the wall, and with his wife and friends entered the box.

Quiet was resumed and “Dundreary” was soon lisping, in inimitable drollery, his opening words. The people now gave their undivided attention to the play, happy to share its humor, wit and gaiety, with one who had earned that right, if ever relief, followed by relaxation, was due to one who had led the nation through the sea of trouble to a triumphant ending. It would be difficult, indeed, to conceive of higher conditions for people’s enjoyment and the chief magistrate’s brief hour of freedom from care and anxiety. How often since have I recalled the scene! All eyes were radiant with the joy of life. “Grim-visaged war had smoothed his wrinkled front” and the bronzed veterans’ uniforms, here and there, set off in fine contrast the rich apparel and adornments of their fair companions. The air was redolent of peace and happiness. The scene was so

impressive that it must have had its influence on the President himself, for he did not move after taking a seat in the front corner, next to the audience, whence he could see almost the entire auditorium and the stage.

The following events, but not the length of time, remain indelibly fixed in my memory. I am confident of the accuracy of their succession and I will now state them in their order.

After one or more scenes,—they may be all in the first act,—the actors had left the stage and scenery slides quite near the front were run out from each wing to represent one side of a room. They did not come together and join at the center with that ease and certainty which are found in well-managed theaters. They bumped together, shot past each other, were pulled back again at a short distance, and then hurriedly thrown together but not uniting. One form was lifted up once or twice when both forms seemed to be joined, but were suddenly pulled slightly apart again and remained so. Momentarily expecting, in this condition of bungling scene-shifting, that the defect would be noticed by the person in charge, and watching both ends of the stage for the entrance of the next actor, as well as the proper adjustment of the scene, the delay in both seems unusually prolonged. Suddenly a pistol shot is heard. To me its direction is from the stage, and I think it is part of the next act, never having seen the play and not knowing its plot. Still no actor comes out. The scenes remain unadjusted. A slight murmur runs through the audience,—it is the suppressed voices of the men and women criticising the delay or questions asking its cause. Time enough has now elapsed to arouse the curious and impatient who rise in their places just as a man is seen standing on the outer edge of the President's box. He suddenly jumps down upon the stage, landing after a flight of nearly fifteen feet in a crouched position about six or eight feet from the side of the tier of boxes. He rises up, and with his face to the audience, he walks leisurely to the center of the stage as if he belonged to the troupe and was entering upon his part. As he faces the audience in the center of the stage,

about ten or twelve feet from the footlights, we get a clear view of him. He is dressed in faultless black, the opening of his vest disclosing a white shirt front, then not often seen by us of the army. His face, surmounted by waving black hair, has a deathly pallor and his eyes are glittering bright, almost emitting fire. Spellbound, never dreaming of the awful tragedy which had already taken place, the audience intently observes the man in his every movement, and wondering still what his appearance means and how it is connected with the play.

Halting at the center, with his face to the audience, as I have already described him, he hissed out these words, *Sic semper tyrannis*, raising a dagger in his right hand above his head with the flashing blade pointing down. With these words that I have quoted, he dropped his hand, turned towards the right of the stage, the left of the audience, and deliberately marched with a stage gait from our sight and disappeared through the wings on that side.

It is not easy to describe the effect produced upon the audience, nor the precise order of events. I now recall my sister's speaking to me and saying, "Why! That's Wilkes Booth!" Also my reply, "It is not possible. He is not down on the bill." A voice in the audience cried out, "The President is shot." This was the first intimation to me of what had happened,—the awful tragedy itself. I started up from my seat to ascertain if it was true and to see what I could do. Several persons in my vicinity tried to cross over the orchestra to the stage. One of them, who proved to be a naval officer,—Flood, of the U. S. S. "Primrose,"—as I learned from his card which he gave me the next day at his hotel,—succeeded in the attempt and climbed into the President's box by clinging to the wood ornamentation overlaying its front.

There was immediate confusion, and cries of alarm and horror were raised as soon as it was stated that the President had been shot, and no one seemed to know what to do. A gentleman on the extreme left gained the stage, as I now remember, at nearly the same time with Flood. He spoke in an excited manner

and passed at once behind the wing on that side. This was J. B. Stewart, of Washington, a dealer of some prominence in real estate. In his testimony afterwards before the military commission, he claimed to have been the first person to reach the stage, and to have been wounded by dagger thrusts or cuts given by the assassin.

As soon as I could make my way through the retiring audience, I ran up the stairs leading to the second story and found they were just bringing the President out of his box,—his wife leading the way with her dress covered with blood, weeping and moaning and wringing her hands all the while with most heart-rending sobs. Laura Keane, the leading lady in the play, had preceded me and stood in front of Mrs. Lincoln calling out from time to time as the sad procession moved on towards the stairway,—“For God’s sake, gentlemen, let this poor woman pass.” As her hands and dress were stained with blood it seems that she must have entered the box, as soon as the door was pushed open and assisted in removing the dying man. I followed the President across the street as far as the house where he was taken in, and where he breathed his last. Waiting to see how I could render service I encountered Lieutenant Parsons of the 4th United States Artillery, who told me that Grant, Stanton, Seward and Johnson, Vice-president, had also been assassinated. This was, indeed, the *darkest hour*. It all foreboded insurrection, an uprising of rebels and assassins by night in the capital city. Instantly I thought of my duty and determined, at all hazards, to do what was in my power to prevent such a horrible atrocity. I ran to our headquarters, more than a mile distant, at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and H Street, and sent word to Major Hall, and in the name of General Howe ordered out all the batteries at Camp Barry to take position immediately at all the street crossings leading from the great avenues, remaining myself at our office. The order was duly executed and the batteries remained in position until the afternoon of the next day. At frequent intervals I reported to the War Department until seven o’clock in the

morning, when I learned by a daily morning paper of the President's death and the escape from the assassin of all others except Mr. Seward.

As I am giving a personal account only of the awful tragedy, but little more remains to be told. The rest is public history and I will add but one other event.

General Howe and General Augur were among the high officers who constituted the guard of honor at the Executive Mansion until the funeral, and remained in the room with the sacred body. I was called there early in the morning of the third day to receive orders from General Howe, who called me into the room. Mr. Stanton came in soon and seemed engaged in viewing the remains and their proper apparel. General Howe spoke to him of the discoloration of one side of the face and inquired of Mr. Stanton whether something could not be done to remove it before the public were allowed to take a last look at their beloved President. I shall never forget the reply, when turning to the general, his eyes suffused and with trembling lips, he gave a deep sigh and in gentle and subdued tones said, "General, it is best as it is. It is now part of the history of the case."

Turning slowly away, I took my last, long look at the great martyr, who now belongs to all the ages; who had always been to me personally as kind as my father; and the friendly grasp of whose hand will remain in my memory an eternal benediction.

The *darkest hour* passed away, but whether I shall ever see "*Our American Cousin*" I cannot say.

THE SEVENTEENTH MAINE AT GETTYSBURG AND IN THE WILDERNESS.

By Captain GEORGE W. VERRILL.

I HAVE selected as the subject of this paper incidents in these particular battles because of the contrast in the battle-fields themselves as well as in the manner of fighting. Both were great battles, stubbornly contested and sanguinary. The small part contributed by the 17th Maine is merely a type of many others, without doubt, yet it has its individuality. Gettysburg was the only engagement where it fought on the defensive or with shelter; in the Wilderness it moved to the assault as usual.

At Gettysburg the regiment took into action about three hundred and fifty swords and muskets. Its loss in killed and wounded was thirty-eight per cent. of the number engaged; one man of every nine who entered the fight receiving his death wound. In the Wilderness it took in four hundred and fifty, of whom forty-four per cent. were killed or wounded; sixty were killed or mortally wounded, which means that one out of every seven and a half men of the regiment gave his life to his country in that battle.

GETTYSBURG.

The final arrangement of the troops of Birney's Division of the Third Corps before the action began, July 2, left a space to be defended between Graham's Brigade at the Peach Orchard, and Ward's Brigade on the Devil's Den Spur, that would require, if adequately manned, at least two large brigades. The only troops of Birney's Division remaining for that duty were Colonel De Trobriand's Brigade, made up of the 3d and 5th Michigan regiments, both small but of the best kind; the 110th

Pennsylvania, still smaller; the 40th New York, the largest in the brigade; and the 17th Maine. The most elevated part of the ground between Graham and Ward was a rocky, uneven, wooded ridge, separated from the Peach Orchard by one hundred yards or so of open ground, and falling away rapidly on the east and south to very low ground, where the drainage from the ridge, with that from the Wheat-field slope, formed marshy ground and one of the rivulets making up Plum Run. In this marshy ground, at the southwest corner of the open known as the Wheat-field, was a dense growth of alders of some extent. The ground rose gradually from this corner on all sides except in the course of Plum Run flowing southeast; the Wheat-field on its south side came to a stone wall beyond which an oak growth of sizable character stretched southward to the Plum Run Ravine and eastward to the plateau which Ward defended with his brigade assisted by Smith's Battery.

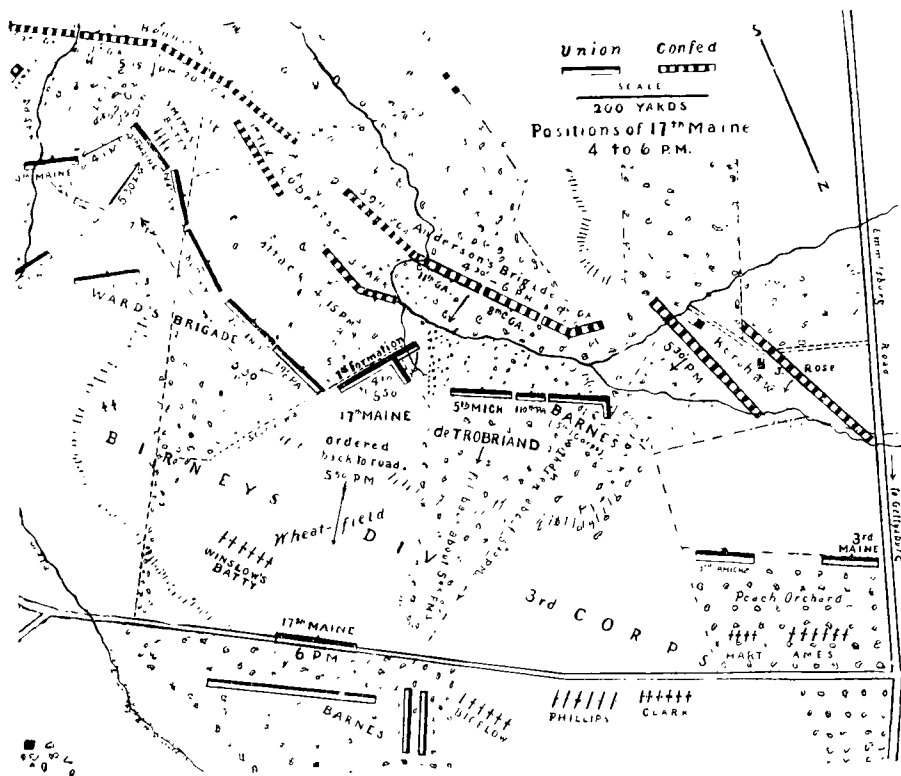
Colonel De Trobriand placed the 5th Michigan and 110th Pennsylvania, with intervals between, on the southerly aspect of the wooded ridge westerly of the Wheat-field, the former with skirmishers out; the 3d Michigan on his westerly front, the right portion of the regiment being extended to the Peach Orchard, deployed as a skirmish line at the Emmitsburg Road and connecting with the skirmish line of the 5th Michigan near the Rose house, a little east of the road. The 40th New York and 17th Maine, also in the same woods, he held as a second line or reserve, the 40th on the left; the 17th had its right at the north edge of the woods about one hundred yards from the Peach Orchard; generally speaking, it was in the rear of the 3d Michigan. We were told that the 17th was in support of this skirmish line; this, however, was not to be.

Not to omit any authentic contingent in the original formation to protect De Trobriand's position it has been affirmed that the 8th New Jersey of Burling's Brigade of the Second Division, a small regiment, was posted to the left of and somewhat in advance of the line of the 5th Michigan, on the south border of the marshy ground west of the alder growth.

Our boys having been thus located at once seized the opportunity to catch a "cat nap," as we had been aroused at two o'clock that morning at Emmitsburg for the march to the field of battle. Between 3.30 and four o'clock P. M., we were rudely awakened from the siesta by a gun from the Peach Orchard battery, and all were at once on the *qui vive*. The battery being in plain view from the right of the 17th, our attention centered upon it; another shot followed, but there was no reply to its challenge. Directly after this, however, we heard artillery voices from Ward's position (Smith's Battery), and on stepping a short distance to the bluff at the Wheat-field, we saw on the side of Little Round Top a small group of signal men with a flag waving its messages. Shells soon came from the enemy exploding high in the air as if aimed at this group, yet they did not interrupt the signaling which advertised the fact of the advance of the enemy at the Emmitsburg Road. Our men were immediately recalled to their ranks; they girded on their armor for the coming contest and the roll was called.

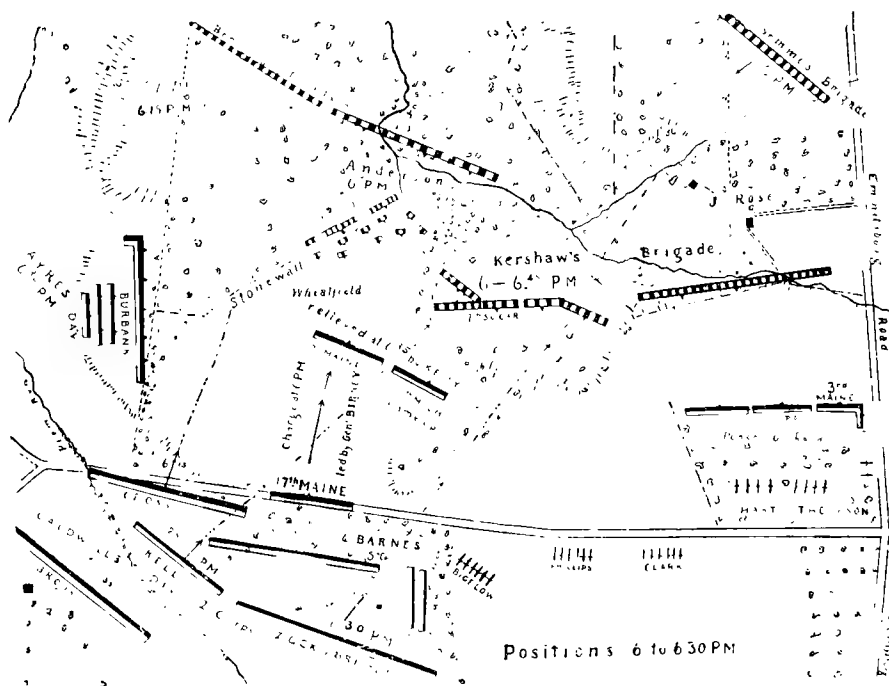
From fifteen to twenty minutes, at the outside, after this artillery opening in General Ward's front, the 17th was put in motion by its left flank at the double-quick, down through the woods, passing the 40th New York, out into the Wheat-field near its southwest corner, crossing which diagonally the left of the regiment brought up at the stone wall on the south side of the field at a point about half-way to its east side, and as the files came in formed along the wall. The wall ended at the rivulet before mentioned, beyond which the two right companies prolonged the line in the same direction; the right company reached the east edge of the alder growth; I was then a member of this company.

It was a critical moment; the enemy was advancing through the oaks driving before him the skirmishers of the 20th Indiana Regiment of Ward's Brigade, who had impeded his advance at the base of the slope in front, and were doing their best as they fell back firing into him, dodging from tree to tree and behind rocks, as they retreated towards the Wheat-field. Their



Drawn by G. W. Verrill.

SEVENTEENTH MAINE IN THE WHEATFIELD.



Drawn by G. W. Verrill,

SEVENTEENTH MAINE IN THE WHEATFIELD.

identity as of the 20th Indiana was established; men of my own company conversed with them. The official report of the 20th Indiana shows that it threw out skirmishers in its front and further to its right to protect that flank since it became the right regiment in Ward's line soon after the battle began. These skirmishers at that point emphasized the fact fully known to our regiment and recognized in the official reports both of Lieutenant-Colonel Merrill of the 17th, and of Colonel De Trobriand, that the 17th was placed in the Wheat-field as I have described as soon as the attack on General Ward was developed, to fill the gap in the line and in time to receive the first advance of the enemy, which was Robertson's Brigade, at that location. The 3d Arkansas was Robertson's left regiment in line. Anderson's Brigade was on Robertson's left in the rear as part of the second line and took no part in the first attack upon us. When it advanced to the assistance of Robertson its center came nearly opposite the position of the 17th Maine, especially the 11th Georgia, with other regiments prolonging this line westward.

As the 17th went in towards the wall the bullets were whizzing,— one of our sergeants was killed going in,—and the advancing rebels were plainly visible. The stone wall was a breastwork ready made; it was not "breast high" as De Trobriand characterizes it in his "Four Years" (*i.e.* unless you stooped some), just a common old-fashioned, thirty-inch stone fence, but it was the best stone wall the 17th Maine ever came across in its travels.

As soon as the skirmishers uncovered our front there were over three hundred loaded rifles to dispute the progress of the enemy, who came on in his usual fierce style,— not in a compact line of battle, which was impossible in the woods, rather in an open order manner. He took our first fire at about seventy-five yards distance; it did not annihilate him or apparently discourage him, but it checked his rush and presently his advance. The left of his line did not extend so far as the right of the 17th, and owing to the oblique direction

forward of our line, we secured a good flanking fire into his left as he advanced, which threw it into disorder. He retired. It goes without saying that a delay of five minutes in the order of movement which brought the 17th to that point of the line would have enabled the enemy to accomplish his object, secure the stone wall and attain the right rear of Ward's Brigade. Winslow's Battery on the ridge at the north side of the Wheat-field, was the only Union force in that opening when the 17th arrived there. As we were going in to take up our position, those of us by the alders noticed, through the dense growth, figures moving in a scattered manner back across our right towards our rear ; we were uncertain whether they were friends or enemies, but did not investigate.

About the time we had arrested the first onset upon us, a small Union force, say one hundred men, with a mounted officer leading them, waving his sword, came down behind the right wing of the regiment. The officer was apparently trying to form them into a line ; they circled about, and wouldn't "stay put." Presently the leader was dismounted and his white horse went free, galloping about ; the small force then went into the wood west of the Wheat-field. At this time we observed the enemy stealing along from the direction of the 3d Arkansas towards our right, concealing themselves as much as possible, and using as a shelter the bank of the main branch of Plum Run, which flows down from the direction of the Emmitsburg Road, some fifty yards in front of our right. The least exposure of a body or head drew our fire ; the fact that the right of our regiment was "in the air," soon became apparent, causing apprehensions of a flanking attack ; however, the alder bushes were so thick they afforded considerable protection on that side.

A renewal of the attack upon our whole regimental front quickly followed in a determined manner, the enemy speedily advancing as far as he had previously come, and then working up as a strong body of skirmishers does, using every rock and tree for his protection. The musketry fire reverberating in

the woods, with the crashing of the brass twelve-pounders of Winslow's Battery in our rear, made a fearful din. Those in the bed of the stream opposed to our right, did not advance at all ; the duel with them was at pistol range ; our unprotected men kept as near the ground as possible and used their rifles, which saved much loss, yet we were suffering considerably. There could be no doubt, however, as to the result of such an attack ; they gave it up and withdrew, excepting those under shelter in Plum Run. A desultory fire ensued.

During the last fusillade a "swish" of bullets came from directly in our rear, and we began to think of what we had seen through the alders. We on the right could not see who fired these shots and in the partial lull of firing I obtained permission from Lieutenant Moore, commanding the company, to investigate the matter ; he also directed me to report to our field officers the situation as to the right of the regiment, the force still in front of us, the lack of any connections on our right, etc. I found the back fire proceeded from two or three small squads sheltered behind boulders about seventy-five yards to our rear in the edge of the woods ; they were not foes. I have forgotten the regiment they named as theirs, probably they were the fighting portion of the small force before spoken of, which went back on the other side of the alders and were rallied as I have described. I invited them cordially to join upon our right, but they declined. Then I requested them not to fire over our heads and they withdrew into the woods.

This left the Wheat-field again all our own so far as infantry was concerned. Reporting to Major West, whom I found near the colors, the facts as to our right, he replied that the right would be thrown back to protect the flank, and directed me to carry back that word, with the caution that it must be done without haste or confusion. The Adjutant, Lieutenant Roberts, soon came to the right with the order from Lieutenant-Colonel Merrill and with instructions to keep up some firing as we moved rearward to change the front of the three right companies. He superintended the movement which was executed in perfect order

but not without casualties : — of these Captain Young of Company K was badly wounded and afterwards died from the effects. The fire of the enemy was increasing, which presaged another advance. The three right companies and part of the fourth thus formed the flanking line along a rail fence which joined the stone wall at about a right angle and was the boundary of the real Wheat-field at the west. The alder growth was now about fifty yards in front of this flank line, leaving a fine roadway between ; the rest of the regiment remained of course where they were at the wall.

We had scarcely finished this new formation when the dogs of war were let loose again. This time we soon perceived that Anderson's Brigade was taking a part conjoined with our former adversaries ; they had evidently observed our movement as if in retreat and a road, as it were, open to them to rush through for Winslow's Battery.

The two right regiments of Anderson with the 3d Arkansas made the Wheat-field their special object while the 9th Georgia moved against De Trobriand to our right and was well taken care of by the 5th Michigan. The odds in numbers were now against us, but our regiment had gained confidence in itself and in its position ; that of the right was admirable as the grade fell away from the wall while a good raking fire was kept up upon those pressing forward where we had vacated. They pushed in to take the wall ; nearer and nearer they came ; never was loading and firing of muzzle-loaders done more rapidly than by the 17th at that time, but it did not check them as before ; they brought their colors close up to the wall, just a handful of men with them, but before it could be secured by a dash the bearer ran back ; one of this plucky squad surrendered and was taken in over the wall by Lieutenant Jo. Perry. When the enemy bore down for the passage in front of the alders he received such a scorching fire at short range that he thought better of the enterprise of taking the battery, — "the game wasn't worth the candle." His loss must have been severe at that point, and he retired behind the alders. Nowhere did he gain foothold upon

our line. In this effort Colonel Manning of the 3d Arkansas was badly wounded and his command demoralized.

We had achieved our success at much cost. Captain Fogg was mortally wounded and many brave men were killed and wounded. So much ammunition had now been expended that economy became necessary; replenishing was done from the boxes of the disabled.

All this time we were ignorant of the progress of the battle elsewhere, but in the lulls of our fight there was ample audible evidence that others were at it. Our gallant prisoner was shown around as a model soldier and sent back under guard, who had instructions to obtain more ammunition; the badly wounded were also carried off under a severe shelling from the enemy, which swept the ridge in our rear, although it had not troubled us at the front to any extent.

But our fighting was not finished yet. It was not long before another advance of the enemy was made. This time the troops of McLaws had come in and joined the left of Anderson, and their combined forces swept down the Plum Run Ravine. Anderson's Brigade conforming to this made the angle in our regimental line their point of attack. It was defended without flinching, with a converging fire from all parts of our line. The contest was most furious. Our losses at the angle were appalling; here fell gallant Lieutenant Dyar, who commanded the Color Company. The attacking column also attempted to break through the alder growth; as they emerged on our side they were disorganized, became fine targets to our flanking right wing and went the way of their predecessors; as they withdrew, the others followed the movement, leaving us more at peace than at any previous time. We were simply hilarious. Fancy therefore our dismay when a few minutes after this success an order came to our commander that as soon as we saw Winslow's Battery move off the field we should also retire across the Wheat-field to the cross road on the north side. This meant of course that a break had occurred somewhere, which turned out to be the advance of Kershaw into the woods at our

right and between us and the Peach Orchard, attributable to the retiring of Barnes' line, and the advance of the enemy up to the Devil's Den upon the left. The battery was seen moving off; our regiment reformed in line on first company, faced about and moved in line of battle to the cross road which comes down from the Peach Orchard and skirts the Wheat-field. Some casualties occurred while crossing the higher ground, the enemy being quick to discover our retirement.

On reaching the cross road messengers were sent to procure ammunition of which we were sorely in need, having already expended over forty rounds per man, the original supply having been sixty rounds, and some had taken as much as eighty, but we got none at the road.

It was now past six o'clock; there were no other troops in sight or connected with us. We had rested there not ten minutes when General Birney with one member of his staff rode up and inquired who we were; on being informed he advanced in front of the regiment and ordered it forward in line; the boys gave cheers in the good old-fashioned Union style and advanced full of the fire of courageous manhood. The general halted the regiment about half-way down to our stone wall, our right being a few rods from the woods on the west side of the Wheat-field. The enemy had come to the wall and his skirmishers were advancing towards us, but our movements stopped their advance. We were ordered to kneel and hold the position. A few shots carried the rebels to the other side of the wall when they began firing at us now placed at a decided disadvantage. Our regiment was entirely alone here for some ten to fifteen minutes when the 5th Michigan came out of the woods and joined upon our right; possibly some of the 110th Pennsylvania and other scattered groups may have come up and joined upon the right of the 5th Michigan, certainly none joined upon the left of the 17th; altogether our little line amounted to a fair-sized regiment as regiments counted then.

The enemy did not attempt an advance from the wall; he satisfied himself thence with target practise. In the woods to

our right, however, he did advance and we were soon engaged in hot work ; he came in near proximity, screened by the trees, rocks, etc., whilst on our part, it was blind work. Once or twice, being emboldened, small detachments would show themselves at the edge of the wood, to be promptly sent back by our fire. As time went by they became more aggressive, until near the end of it, the struggle was almost hand-to-hand. There was no wavering or shadow of turning ; it seemed as if the last man would there find his allotted ounce of lead. Our Adjutant Roberts here received a severe wound and the services of this most perfect officer were lost to the regiment from that moment. A few minutes later on a missile penetrated my thigh ; what happened on the field after that I have carefully gathered from Companions West, Green, Mattocks, and others—officers and men. As I went back to the rear I passed through two lines of infantry fronting towards the Wheat-field, in the belt of woods at the rear of the cross road. It has always been my impression that their patches were red of the Fifth Corps ; they were standing in line as if ready to advance, but the 17th did not come out for some fifteen minutes after I left it. Into the open field to the rear of this belt of woods, the enemy was sending his compliments both from artillery and small arms from the direction of the Emmitsburg Road. All this time Birney was doing his utmost to bring in fresh troops, hoping to reestablish his line, somewhat drawn in from north of the Peach Orchard towards Round Top. Our small fragment of a brigade was about all there was of that new line on that part of the field, when he succeeded in getting up Caldwell's Division of the Second Corps. The cartridges of our regiment were at length substantially exhausted, none remaining except the last few that the soldier keeps for the last extremity ; some of the men had fired as many as seventy rounds during the afternoon. While desperately fixing bayonets to repel what might at any moment come, a line or column was noticed on the east side of the Wheat-field, apparently moving down to Ward's first position ; finally after this long and exhaustive struggle of the little

band, melting away all the time, and yet successful in keeping the enemy at bay, at about 6.40 o'clock a line came in which gave relief. Its approach was announced by a volley from it fired directly over the heads of the 17th from the higher ground behind, into the woods. Whether it was of the Fifth Corps or of the Second Corps I cannot affirm; the official reports state that the 17th was relieved by Second Corps troops; if so, they were probably the Irish Brigade. That ended the fighting of the 17th on July 2. As it retired across the open field in rear of the Wheat-field, it passed through a converging fire from the two directions and some casualties occurred. The next day the regiment was sent to the front line in haste alongside the 9th Michigan Battery. Its loss under the terrific shelling was two killed and ten wounded; of the latter, Companion (then Lieutenant) Green was "knocked out" for a short time by the concussion of a bursting shell, and Lieutenant Whitten was permanently disabled.

My story is simply the amplification of what one will find on the bronze tablet affixed to the monument of the 17th which stands in the Wheat-field at the wall where its colors so steadfastly remained, in these words, first duly submitted to, and approved by, the Committee on Monument Inscriptions of the Battlefield Memorial Association:

"The 17th Maine fought here in the Wheat-field 2½ hours, and at this position from 4.10 to 5.45 o'clock P. M., July 2, 1863. On July 3, at time of the enemy's assault it reenforced the center and supported artillery. Loss 132. Killed or mortally wounded, 3 officers, 37 men. Wounded, 5 officers, 87 men."

THE WILDERNESS.

Examining the volume of the Rebellion Records pertaining to the Army of the Potomac, covering May, 1864, one will find no official reports by either our division, brigade, or regimental commanders. On discovering this fact we immediately forwarded that of the 17th Maine, a duplicate of which was

fortunately preserved, and sometime it may appear in a supplementary volume. These reports were required in August, 1864. It is true that commanders had changed in the interval and that many present in August were not with their troops in the Wilderness, as was the case in our regiment, but facts were easily obtainable from officers who had participated.

The accidental or wilful neglect in making the reports called for, or in the transmittal of them to the proper authorities by any officer, high or low in rank, was a great wrong done to some units of that noble army. The lack of the reports or of their publication is a loss to history. From the Rebellion Records, one can indeed glean that the 17th Maine, at the beginning of that campaign, was in the Second Brigade, Third Division (Birney's) of the Second Corps; hence in the Wilderness the only account one can obtain of its service, beyond an inference from its losses, will be found in the report of the corps commander, as a possible molecule of the corps, perhaps even a small factor when allusion is made to the doings of Birney's Division. It was indeed true that the Third Corps had ceased to exist as an organization. The terrible losses at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg had left the old Third Corps so small that it was all condensed into four brigades, and of these, two brigades in each, were formed the Third and Fourth Divisions of the Second Corps when the reorganization of the army took place in the spring of 1864; but these two divisions still retained the old *esprit de corps* and wore their Third Corps badges,—Birney's Division retained the "red patch" bestowed upon it by Philip Kearny and was destined to maintain its fighting reputation.

As a proof of this you will find from the official tabulation that in the battle of the Wilderness the loss of Birney's Division, killed and wounded, was greater than the combined losses of any other two divisions of the corps; that the loss in our brigade was greater in number than in any other brigade in the army, and greater than the loss of either of the divisions of the Second Corps,—except of course our own. So much for the records.

The 17th was still under Birney. At the beginning of May, 1864, the regiment was at its best ; it had in Colonel West a gallant leader and a strict disciplinarian, who required of all their full performance of duty.

At eleven o'clock of the night of May 3, our division, with hushed voices, filed out of its camping-ground, keeping away from all fires or lights, seeking depressions in the fields, and took up its silent march towards the Rapidan. All night long its columns crept along like a prodigious serpent twisting with the course of the roads. With few halts it arrived at the river at nine o'clock the next morning and crossed at Ely's Ford. After a short rest it again took up its tramp, and in the afternoon of that day arrived upon the battlefield of Chancellorsville where a year and a day gone by it had fought ; — nay, more, it so chanced that the 17th Maine found itself in bivouac upon the identical spot where it had so fought and there that night slept with all those memories haunting the dreams. Relics of the battle were found in abundance, some of a not very cheerful character ; for instance, one of the men collected within a radius the length of one company fifteen skulls which he piled up as a little monument. Alas ! within three days his own might have been added to the number,— he had gone beyond the sound of battle !

At an early hour on the morning of May 5, we took up the line of march towards Spotsylvania, and by ten o'clock had arrived at or near Todd's Tavern without incident. All were feeling cheerful ; there had been no sound of battle ; we were on the road to Richmond at last, fast getting away from the Wilderness.

Our march however came to a sudden stop ; after some delay our column faced about, taking back tracks. On reaching the Brock Road, which was farther westward than that we had followed from Chancellorsville but came into it, we went northward upon that towards the Rapidan. The cause of this transpired to be that the enemy came down the Orange Turnpike, and the Orange Plank Road, intercepted the marching troops and

fell upon the Fifth Corps and upon Getty's Division of the Sixth Corps, which had moved past the Fifth Corps southward along the Brock Road as far as its intersection with the Plank Road; this intersection was nearly at right angles. At and near it the fighting of Birney's Division was destined to take place.

When we approached the battleground we saw skirmishers out in the open fields about half a mile west of us; these fields were at the southwest corner of the Wilderness which terminates in that direction, about two miles south of the Plank Road and about one and one-half miles west of the Brock Road. We could not see any large force of the enemy, and in fact the right of his line did not extend so far south as the fields at that time. We marched along the road in which there were now some troops, generals and their staffs, newspaper correspondents, men piling up rails along the roadside as breastworks, and a great deal of excitement; there was sound of some firing in the woods. When the 17th had passed perhaps a hundred rods beyond the junction of roads the column halted and faced to the front.

A short rest was taken; this was, as I remember it, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, say half-past four. There was no line of troops in the road connecting with the right of the 17th, and the precautionary order to Colonel West was to advance and connect his right to the Sixth Corps down in the thick growth somewhere. The low foliage was so dense you could not see beyond pistol range. At the word of command we leaped over the obstructions at the west side of the road in line of battle moving rapidly forward; the little firing we could make out at our front was of no consequence. As we advanced we obliqued to the right somewhat, to find our connection as ordered; the regiment on our left did not keep in contact with ours, and so before we had advanced a quarter-mile we found a gap on our left, no connection on our right, but plenty of rebels in our front. At the direction of the colonel I (then acting as adjutant) took a squad of men and started with it to find the

Sixth Corps; skirting our flank through the woods to a distance greater than our regiment front, I could not discover a trace of the Sixth Corps or other troops. So reporting to the colonel he said he should remain and fight where we were; in fact the action had already begun in a lively manner; the Brigade Pioneer Corps then with us, fully armed, the size of a company, commanded by Lieutenant Noyes of our regiment, was deployed under the colonel's orders like skirmishers beyond our right flank, bending back towards the road as a guard to that flank, with instructions to Lieutenant Noyes to observe and report anything they saw. The regiment at once became hotly engaged. Our position was on the farther side of a wide sort of valley from which the ground sloped upward to the general grade, the highest point being at the right of the regiment; the growth was somewhat more open here. The enemy was found in a depression in our front; the left of the regiment came upon him almost face to face. A few rounds drove him out of this and he retired to higher ground, where, forming his line obliquely to ours, he got a cross-fire upon our left wing, to meet which the two left companies were "refused." Expecting every minute that the rest of the brigade would move up as far as we had and thus secure a fine chance to roll up the enemy and rout them, Colonel West thought it best to hold as we were. The rest of the brigade however did not show up and the opportunity was lost.

Without flinching our men stood in line loading and firing as coolly as possible. So also did the other side, their line being from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty yards distant, with sufficient trees intervening to considerably screen them. As time wore on and nothing came to us from either flank it seemed as if we were holding a little battle of our own.

At length our steady pegging at them made an impression; their fire opposite our right was perceptibly slackening. This was an opportunity quickly seized by our colonel; he ordered the left company to stand fast unless the enemy was seen to retreat, then threw the regiment forward at a left wheel, the

extreme right thus moving at the double-quick. This movement caused considerable noise in the rush and the enemy surrendered his position on our advance. We passed beyond his original position opposite the right wing and he yielded somewhat at the left, but held on there ; with the uncertainty concerning our friends to our left it was not considered safe to carry the movement farther and firing began again vigorously.

The very low ground in which the dense growth formed the Wilderness must account for the lack of hearing the musketry of any other troops. There were many engaged of course, as the reports show that Getty's Division was having a hard time of it, but we heard them not, nor indeed even our own brigade, to any extent, with one exception, which was this: after we had been engaged about an hour a fire from the rear passed directly over the left of the regiment. This was annoying, and the acting field-officer on that part of the line sent a trusty officer, Lieutenant Pratt, back to request whatever troops they were not to do that any more. The officer went back one hundred yards or more to the other side of the valley and there found a regiment,— I think of our own brigade but do not know for certain. He delivered his message properly to the commanding officer who was much affronted and threatened to arrest him. The lieutenant reported the facts to Colonel West, who went to that valiant commander and gave him a piece of his mind ; it stopped the back fire, but it did not procure any advance of that regiment. The Wilderness swallowed up sounds ; it began to swallow light also. We had been there about two hours, when, as darkness began to approach rapidly, we found the fire of the enemy was abating. We waited a short time in expectation of some counter-movement by him and held our line and our fire to meet him properly ; but not being attacked, our skirmishers advanced in front ; they found the enemy had retired. Our fight for the day was over and gallantly won. Our patrolling parties secured about thirty prisoners and took them to the rear ; we also found many dead and wounded in our front.

The colonel despatched Captain Green to hunt for our brigade on the left. I was ordered to find headquarters, report our situation and take orders. On arriving near the road I learned that General Alexander Hays, our brigade commander, had been killed early in the action. A staff officer rode back with me to the regiment and our surgeon with stretchers and carriers followed to the front. Our own badly wounded were taken off; we found threescore, at least, of disabled rebels who were glad indeed to be made prisoners. Hunting through the woods on this charitable errand, I saw what made a startling and deep impression on my mind. A wounded rebel lay on his back, and by his side, stretched out at full length, one of the very large, long, black snakes of that region. Driving the serpent away, I asked the man if he would like to be removed and taken care of; he refused the offer, stating his wound was such he wished to die, intimating its nature. I turned the case over to the doctor.

Captain Green in his search after the brigade passed over the ground where the enemy's line had been, now plainly defined by the dead and the warlike accouterments. After a while he discovered a regiment wandering about in the woods, and was informed that it had been sent to relieve the 17th an hour before, but had failed to find it.

The rest of the brigade having been previously relieved and massed nearer to the road, the 17th was ordered back and again placed on the right of the brigade. Our regimental loss for the day was seventy-five in killed and wounded. A cold lunch followed in this bivouac; also a fresh supply of cartridges. Notwithstanding all the experiences of the day, and a certainty of similar ones on the morrow, without any doubt every man slept "like a top." Nature claims her dues. In the night orders were received to be ready to advance at 4.30 o'clock in the morning.

May 6, at 3.30 A. M., all were aroused, but very quietly; in fact, not a loud word was allowed, and orders were issued to eat and be ready for duty; the greatest hardship complained of was the deprivation of a dipper of hot coffee, no fires being permitted.

We were instructed that there would be a general advance at precisely five A. M.; that our brigade was on the right of the Second Corps. The 17th being on the right of the brigade, was, as the night before, the extreme right regiment of our corps. Everything with the 17th was ready for the movement at 4.30, and the brigade deployed in line of battle very nearly on the same ground where we started into the woods the previous afternoon, but no troops were there on our right.

Promptly at the appointed time the movement began, at first in quick time, keeping up a good alignment, considering the intercepting trees. It was a grand wave of battle. Presently shots from the rebel pickets indicated their presence, and then, with one accord, with cheers, the wave swept forward at the double-quick. The enemy had thrown up a low line of shelter; a single volley from this line was all we received, and to the rear they went as if the "Old Boy" was after them, except a few who threw down their arms. On and on went the wave. There was a tendency in the line at our left to give in that direction and our course became slightly oblique as we advanced, but there was no halting or hesitation; the enemy was before us and he was our goal. The oblique movement towards the left finally brought our regiment to the Plank Road and still in line we advanced until we had obliquely crossed the road with our right company upon it; then the advance was guided by the Plank Road so far as we were concerned. After thus moving about one and one-half miles from our starting-point, and coming to a little opening, the line halted to get straightened out as we were then met by a brisk fire; there was another regiment upon our left that had kept even pace with ours; this regiment was the 4th Maine, Colonel Walker being with it and also in command of the brigade. The two regiments extended just across the open space; a slight fringe of pine trees was at the front of this opening which we occupied. We had thus swept in our irresistible charge a wide section of the woods clean, and stood upon the western edge, farthest of all to

the front. Beyond the pines there was a large space of cleared grounds, like uplands, with farm buildings on the side opposite us about thirty rods away. About these buildings the enemy had intrenched and on the Plank Road he had a section of a battery looking us in the face, which greeted us with its compliments. It appeared that the 17th, with its mate, was somewhat in advance of the rest of the brigade, on both flanks ; if we had connections at all, they were bent back, especially on our right, and so we formed, as it were, the apex of the line.

It has been stated that General Lee was at the buildings in our front, and that our break through his lines caused quite a panic. However this may be we no sooner reached this point than a hot fire upon us began, both of musketry and from the artillery, which made our position not an enviable one to occupy, unsheltered as we were. We responded with our rifles, seemingly at rather long range, but as their bullets reached us effectively doubtless ours did the same ; at any rate the battery was substantially silenced.

This firing was kept up for a long time and the question was, why did not other troops come up to go with us across that open ground ? We did not know then that Wadsworth's Division of the Fifth Corps had been expected to join on our right, but had met with such resistance that it was much broken, portions even disorganized. We were thus in a pretty predicament, liable at any moment to be carried into the enemy's lines by a dash from our right rear ; but at the same time we had advanced beyond the right flank of the forces contesting with Wadsworth, which had its due effect, as will be seen later on. Everyone felt that something should be done. Where was Birney ? Not even a staff officer from him came near us. Reading now the reports of the battle one will find the astonishing assertion that there were four lines of battle at this time on the Plank Road ; if so, why did they not come along ? Wounded men who went back from our regiment at that point have stated that the nearest line of troops at our rear was over a quarter-mile from us, lying down ; they wore white patches,

probably of the Second Division of our own corps. The golden opportunity was slipping away.¹

Impatient of the situation, and in order to reconnoiter in our front, Colonel West stepped to the edge of the open, a little beyond our right flank, where, almost instantly, he was badly wounded in the thigh and was obliged to leave the field; his horse had been shot under him while we were advancing. The command of the regiment devolved upon the senior officer present, Captain John C. Perry. About that time, Colonel Walker of the 4th Maine rode along (he has since stated to me that he was then in command of the brigade) and being told of our unfortunate loss, he said he would look after us, but to hold our ground, which was done in a resolute manner. The fire grew warmer and the men were dropping fast. Presently a mounted officer rode rapidly in from our right rear, through our right company, to our front; he was waving his sword over his head, his silvery hair shining like a meteor's glory. Without halting, without asking who we were, or informing us of himself,—a stranger assuredly,—yet with the fury of battle in his eyes, he half turned and shouted: "Forward! Forward!" and rode out beyond the woods into the open field, still brandishing his sword and shouting, "Forward!" It fairly took away our breaths, and consternation rooted us to the ground. Where were the troops he was thus urging on? Not many yards in front of the pine trees he fell from his horse, apparently killed, and the horse continued on his course, straight for the enemy, as if the spirit of the noble chieftain still rode for victory, still shouting, "Forward" in the glorious charge.

Thus General James S. Wadsworth, the pure patriot, the bravest of the brave, died the soldier's death under the gaze of the 17th Maine, unseen by any of his own brave troops. He was in command of the division of the Fifth Corps on our

¹ Why it slipped away may be better understood if one will carefully read the now published orders, communications, etc., between the generals, from corps commanders up, as the battle progressed. It was an attempt to fight a battle by telegraph by those not seeing, nor in any close communication, with the actual fighting lines of battle. There was no hand on the tiller, nor captain on the bridge.

right, and had rallied, or tried to rally his columns to a new advance. Doubtless he supposed us to be a part of his own command.¹

Very soon after that a new experience befell us. While we were briskly firing, a column or body of troops began to cross our front from our right, not over seventy-five yards away from us. Seeing this we supposed them to be those the white-haired officer was leading, and at first the men did not fire into them. I stepped forward to ascertain their identity and at once captured my first prisoner. He came right against me and asked the way to the rear. Supposing at first he was wounded, I pointed down the road, but his uniform began to open my eyes. I asked if he was a "Confed" and he said he was. I then turned him about and asked him if all that mass of men was "Confederate," and he answered they were. I then let him go to the rear. Now we had them at short range, indeed, every bullet would count and every man strove to improve the occasion. It was a body of men large as a brigade, exhibiting no battleflags, moving quickly but not running, going diagonally away from us, some of them stepping out of the crowd and firing at us. This was the enemy in retreat that we had outflanked, a mass that could have crushed our thin line in an instant had it turned upon us. Many of their scattering men came into our lines as did the first one, and we were too stupid to collect them and send them back under guard, to be credited as our captures; all of them were directed to go down the Plank Road where we knew they would be taken care of, unless, perchance, they stampeded some of the numerous lines in our rear.

It was getting along in the forenoon, I cannot give the hour, but while yet this mass of retreating rebels was crossing our front, Colonel Walker rode up and said our line must be withdrawn somewhat as the enemy had broken in somewhere on

¹ This could not have been later than seven A. M., and yet we find in some official reports statements as if Wadsworth were directing affairs several hours after that, thus shifting responsibility upon one already dead, or dying, in the enemy's lines.

the left, between us and the Brock Road. What a mockery to the greatest opportunity an army could have for a successful advance! Yet it was ours to obey.

Firing as we moved rearward our line was slowly taken back about a third of a mile, then halted and faced to the front. There was no fire upon us but we could hear some musketry opposite our left. The regiment was moved again by the right to some distance north of the Plank Road, and after several small changes we were told that a permanent line of works would be built and to do it as speedily as possible. All set to with alacrity and in the course of an hour a very formidable looking barrier rewarded our toil. Not a shot disturbed us. After the work was done the haversacks received attention and the absent were accounted for as much as possible. We were beginning to think the day's work was over when suddenly, without any apparent cause, the troops to our left abandoned their works and moved to the rear. "Outflanked again" was the only explanation. The 17th proposed to remain there until ordered out, so did not take up the movement but prepared for action. After a while Captain Briscoe, of General Birney's staff, rode in and found us. We were mutually delighted, but he said he must move us as the enemy was considerably to our rear on the left, and he was forming a new line running back obliquely to the Brock Road; the right of the regiment remained as it was and the left was swung back as he directed. Some troops connected on our right. While there some ammunition came in but no enemy that we could discover. However, for some cause only known to the wise, the line did not hold its ground, this time the retreat beginning somewhere to our right and breaking away from us left our right flank in the air. The whole line then slid to the left, we with it. After various moves and halts with changes of direction, in rode Briscoe again and said it was "no use, we might as well retire and get some coffee at the road," which we did in common with the whole line. Of all those four battle lines which had been in our "support" at the front we saw nothing except the line of "white

patches," posted near where we made the first stand after leaving the advanced front.

We were glad to find a stopping-place at last. Our brigade was formed on the east side of the Brock Road, and we were at once ordered to construct a third line of works, two lines being there already and occupied. After finishing the task we were unceremoniously ordered farther to the left, just the other side of the junction with the Plank Road, where three lines were also up, and placed in the third line. This was after noon ; the tired-out men lay down to rest.

When the enemy's attack came, about four o'clock in the afternoon, and had just reached the first line of works in our direct front (abandoned for a short distance on account of having taken fire), and when we were momentarily expecting to move forward an aide rode up from our left in great excitement and shouted out orders for the purpose of moving to the regiment, intending to hurry it at double-quick by the left flank to some other place. The endeavor to execute this ill-timed movement resulted in some confusion. A portion of the regiment took the orders to mean an advance in our front, a movement which had begun to be made by troops connecting with us, and joined in that advance, aiding in the repulse of the enemy. The most of the regiment however in a few minutes were got into line ready for the intended flank movement, but the aide had been shot down without explaining the movement. However the crisis was safely passed and the day's work was done.

May seventh the regiment took part in a reconnaissance in front, finding the enemy entrenched in force, which added about ten in killed and wounded to our score of losses, that amounted to one hundred and ninety-seven in the three days' battle.

THE BATTLE OF "THE CRATER."

By Captain HORACE H. BURBANK.

ON June 16, 1864, having crossed the James River *via* pontoon bridge the night before, the "Army of the Potomac," then comprising the Second, Fifth and Ninth Army Corps, respectively commanded by Major-Generals Hancock, Warren and Burnside, all under command of General Meade, sat down in front of, and about two miles distant from, Petersburg on its west. Here began a series of operations which resulted in a nearly ten months' siege of that historic city.

The Ninth Corps, in whose Second Division (General Robert B. Potter's) were the 31st and 32d Maine Regiments, held an advanced position along a cut of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, which was intersected by Poo Creek, a tributary of the Appomattox River.

In front of Potter's Division, about one hundred and seventy yards from the extreme point, was a fort, situated in an angle of the rebel lines of works, known as Elliott's salient, named for the officer in command of that portion of their line, and also called Pegram's salient. This fort—in which were two hundred and fifty-six officers and men of the 18th and 22d South Carolina, and two officers and twenty men of Pegram's Petersburg Battery—became the "Crater" of war history; in rear of which was Cemetery Hill, whose crest was our objective point, overlooking Petersburg and much adjacent country.

Between our line and this fort, as also from the fort to the crest beyond, the ground was open and ascending. A heavy line of rifle-pits was speedily constructed in our front, and a little to the rear of this advanced line came the suddenly sloping ground formed by the railroad cut and the creek already named, and still behind were low ground and woods, affording

admirable opportunity for massing large bodies of troops. Nature and commerce had seemingly combined to favor subsequent operations at this point.

The First Brigade of the Second Division of the Ninth Corps was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Pleasants, an accomplished mining engineer, whose regiment (48th Pennsylvania) was recruited in the mining regions of that state. To this officer belongs the credit of originating the project of mining the Elliott salient in his front by running a subterranean gallery from the cut or hollow to a point directly beneath the fort. This project met the warm approval of his division and corps commanders, and the nominal endorsement of General Meade; but it was an open secret with us, if indeed it were any secret, that he had little faith in such a scheme, regarding it as an idle fancy of a disordered brain, the device of a crank, and military engineers at his headquarters did not conceal their derision of the plot. Major Duane, chief engineer of the Army of the Potomac, pronounced it nonsense and an impossibility. With Colonel Pleasants in charge of, and experienced miners detailed for, the work, the outcome (and the ingoing) was a notable success.

The main gallery was five hundred and ten feet long, four feet high, slightly less in width at the bottom, narrowing somewhat to the top. At the inner end of the main gallery were dug two lateral galleries, one extending to the right thirty-eight feet, the other leftward thirty-seven feet, forming a segment of a circle concave to the Confederate lines. In these lateral galleries were made eight magazines or chambers, and in each chamber was placed a ton of powder, these chambers being connected by wooden tubes with the main gallery, and these tubes attached to three fuses, reaching to the mouth of the mine. Colonel Pleasants reports that "the material excavated was carried out in handbarrows made of cracker-boxes. . . I got pieces of hickory and nailed them on the boxes in which we received our crackers, and then iron-claded them with hoops of iron taken from old pork- and beef-barrels." Surely this was a

slow and inadequate process for besieging a city, and reminds prisoners of the methods of tunneling their way out of Libby Prison and other like pens.

This work was begun June 24, and completed July 23, which, considering the lack of proper mining tools, the size of the excavation, and the necessity of doing much of the labor by night, in order to carry away and conceal the earth removed, eighteen thousand cubic feet, entitled its projector to universal commendation.

Prior to July 30, the day fixed for the explosion, various maneuvers, evolutions and changes of position, on the part of the besieging army, many of which were of a menacing nature, were resorted to, under direction of Generals Grant and Meade, productive of good results, and which left this portion of the rebel line certainly as weak as, and perhaps weaker than, any other part in our front. After dark on July 29, the men of the Ninth Corps, not then in the rifle-pits and trenches, were massed in the ravine, cut and woods, in readiness for the contemplated assault at early dawn.

In the order of battle issued by Meade, July 29, the Ninth Corps was to be the assaulting column, supported on its right by the 18th (Ord's) Corps which had been within supporting distance, in whose rear was to be Hancock's Corps, while on Burnside's left was Warren with the Fifth Corps. The mine was to be sprung at 3.30 A. M., and instantly thereupon the artillery of all kinds in battery was ordered to "open upon those points of the enemy's works whose fire covered the ground over which our columns must move."

When, on the twenty-ninth, darkness had shut down over this scene, expectancy changed to lively anticipation and busy activity. The troops were transposed as directed, orders were whispered along our lines, and the men lay on their arms, many of them with most of the officers sleeplessly awaiting the dawn. It was a forbidding season for sleep. Many occupied the weary, wakeful, watchful hours in writing brief messages homeward. Enough had been said and done hitherto, to spread the contagious

sentiment that earnest, serious work was to be our lot the next day, and faithful men banished Nature's kind restorer. The longest night will have its dawning day, and so did that. The appointed hour arrived, and yet no sound of warning arose on the morning air. Expectancy gave place to anxiety, and anxiety was supplanted by intensity of wonder and fear; wonder at the unexplained delay, fear that failure would follow this attempt to capture Petersburg. An hour and more of such delay and unknown its cause. Later on we learned that the lighted fuses had gone out. At this supreme moment, a brave boy, Sergeant Henry Rees, of the 48th Pennsylvania, a name worthy of honorable mention among men of courage, volunteered to enter the mine, and crawling on hands and knees in utter darkness, safely relighted the fuses.

At 4.45 a heavy, huge roar, as if from the bowels of the earth, belched forth, and the occupants of that fated fort, all unconscious of the cause of their sudden awakening, many never knowing what deadly enginery closed their military record, started heavenward. Earth, stones, timbers, arms, legs, guns unlimbered and bodies unlimbed, amid clouds of dust and smoke, ascended in fearful confusion and havoc. It was a spectacle never to be forgotten. The deadly plot is realized. The-ory ends in dire demonstration; "nonsense" materializes into achievement, and the derision of the skeptic vanishes in the smoke and débris of that improvised volcano. Well may he whose brain conceived and evolved that work triumph over unbelief and jeers. But, alas, not so thoroughly "the charge is prepared." Into the deadly breach we go, but all in vain.

Attached to the Ninth Corps was the Fourth Division under General Ferrero, colored troops, and it had been Burnside's desire that this division should lead the charge. They were not veterans, had seen little service at the front, and Meade objected. The matter being referred to General Grant, he sustained the objection, and directed that one of the veteran divisions of the corps should lead the assault. It is a source of keen regret that Burnside's better judgment failed him at this

critical moment, or, rather, in providing for a critical moment. Instead of selecting his best division commander, General Potter, of the Second Division, of whose ability there was no question, and whose heart knew no fear, or General O. B. Willcox, of his Third Division (of whom General Grant writes: "In fact, Potter and Willcox were the only division commanders Burnside had who were equal to the occasion), he suffered this choice to be made by lot. "Pulling straws" was his resort for the purpose of deciding an important military movement; yes, a movement which, more than any other, would determine the issue of the day's fight. Such a resort was well enough, all conditions, all men being equal, but here it was a fatal error.

The lot fell upon the one least fitted in head or heart for such an important attack, weighted with such responsibilities and possibilities, to wit, General Ledlie of the First Division, of whom Grant, in his "Personal Memoirs," writes: "Ledlie, besides being otherwise inefficient, proved also to possess disqualifications less common among soldiers;" and, of the division, he says it was "a worse selection than the first [the colored] could have been." Swinton in his "Campaigns," pronounces it "a division fitted neither in its composition nor its commander for the glorious but exacting duty assigned it."

Unfortunately this division led the assaulting column, and entered "the Crater," a chasm "one hundred and thirty-five feet in length, ninety-seven feet in breadth, and thirty feet deep," so reported General Bushrod R. Johnson of the Confederate Army, August 20, 1864; "a crater of loose earth two hundred feet long, full fifty feet in width, and twenty-five to thirty feet in depth," writes Lossing in his "Field Book of the Civil War"; "an enormous hole in the ground about thirty feet deep, sixty feet wide, and one hundred and seventy feet long," according to Major W. H. Powell of General Ledlie's staff. Whatever its name or dimensions, it proved alike beneficial and baneful; it was the open door to magnificent possibilities and to stupendous failure. And herein the First Division remained for eight or nine hours, exposed after the first hour

to a deadly fire of solid shot and shell from the enemy's artillery from three directions, its leader "instead of being with his division in the crater, was most of the time in a bomb-proof ten rods in rear of the main line of the Ninth Corps works, where it was impossible for him to see the movement" of his troops. Huddled together here, *en masse*, without formation, or room for formation, this division thus became powerless and useless occupants of a slaughter pen, from which no one present had ability to extricate it, and, besides, formed a serious obstacle to the forward movement of other troops.

The Third Division under Willcox followed, and although originally ordered to pass to the left of the crater, also entered these "shambles," and chiefly halted there, a small portion passing through to the left, the confusion which had enveloped Ledlie's Division having become contagious. This division took possession of about one hundred and fifty yards at the left of the crater. Potter's Division was ordered to follow Willcox and enter the enemy's works on the right of the crater. This order was partially executed, the Second Brigade under General S. G. Griffin, passed through and to the right of this chasm, in more or less confusion, and in hardly tactical formation, taking possession of the deserted rifle-pits, for about two hundred yards. The absence of all efforts, if not of orders, to remove the abatis, *chevaux-de-frise*, and other obstructions between the hostile lines, especially in front of the fort and works immediately adjacent on either side, was the principal cause of the broken lines or columns, and thus, as also by the condition of the troops in the crater, brigades were detached from divisions, and regiments from brigades, and regimental companies became well-nigh inextricably mixed.

The 31st and 32d Maine of Griffin's Brigade mainly reached the works at the right of the crater, awaited orders, and at intervals kept up their fire until ordered to cease. Twice this brigade essayed to charge the crest. The enemy, however, had recovered from the first shock of the explosion, and improving, the moments of delay caused by attempts to reform our lines, had

concentrated in this vicinity in such numbers, aided by well-aimed guns and mortars, that twice we were repulsed with heavy loss. A single brigade, unsupported, could not possibly carry the crest. Brave officers and brave men did their best, and evinced valor worthy of a better issue. But the golden opportunity for success, that first half-hour succeeding the explosion, had passed never to return.

And now, to make "confusion worse confounded," General Ferrero's colored division appeared upon the scene. Their presence inspired the rebels with a courage induced by their hatred of color, which added to the desperation of their situation. To them the loss of Petersburg meant the fall of Richmond, and they exerted their entire energies to avert such a calamity. One hour and another of valiant but futile endeavor to reach Cemetery Hill wore away amid shot and shell, but it required no special gift of prophecy to foretell the unwelcome issue of this assault on Petersburg. Our final repulse was inevitable. The enemy had withdrawn his troops from other parts of his line and concentrated all available strength on this, his weakest point. Determined, desperate, bitter, he made his final charge. With brigades of Virginia, Alabama and Georgia troops, and some North Carolina and South Carolina regiments, making their way through a covered way and thence into the trenches, unexposed, a line of battle was formed less than one hundred and sixty yards from our right, which advanced at an angle of about forty-five degrees to our line. This line, with terrific yell, aided also by an enfilading fire into our line from a battery in commanding position on the right, charged upon that portion of the Second Division which had taken possession of the abandoned works on the right of the crater. It was a desperate encounter, but of brief duration. Our men jumped from the trenches and made the best resistance possible. White and black men fought bravely, but, with no division commander within eighty yards of the captured works, and no brigade commander there outside the crater, and without formation of any kind to resist such a charge, it was in vain.

What had been thrown away in the early moments succeeding the explosion could not then and thus be recovered. Those of our division and the colored men who were not lying dead and wounded on the fated field, or who had not withdrawn to our original lines pursuant to General Meade's orders, were taken prisoners, and many, who had but a few hours before anticipated a triumphal march into Petersburg, entered the city captives of war. Those of us who were at the right of the crater were captured shortly after nine o'clock, having held that position about four hours. Those on the left met a like fate soon after, while those within the chasm remained until one o'clock P. M., or a little later, when those who had survived shot and shell, or had not escaped to the rear over the dangerous ground between the original lines, were added to the list of "missing."

General Meade sent orders to Burnside at 9.45 A. M., to withdraw his troops to his own entrenchments.

Colonel Wentworth took about one hundred and fifty men and officers of the 32d Maine Regiment into the fight; it lost in killed, one officer, Lieutenant John G. Whitten of Alfred, and nine men; wounded, five officers, Colonel Mark F. Wentworth, Captain James L. Hunt, and Lieutenants Whitehouse, James W. Goodrich, of my company, and J. J. Chase, and twenty-three men; captured, Captains H. R. Sargent, Isaac P. Fall and myself, and Lieutenants William B. Pierce, Henry M. Bearce, Henry G. Mitchell, formerly of Portland, and George L. Hall of Nobleboro; total captured, seven officers and fifty-five men; a total loss of one hundred; two-thirds of the command engaged.

The casualties of the Ninth Corps on that sanguinary day were: killed, fifty officers and four hundred and twenty-three men; wounded, one hundred and twenty-four officers and one thousand five hundred and twenty-two men; missing (prisoners) seventy-nine officers and one thousand two hundred and seventy-seven men; total, three thousand four hundred and seventy-five. Surely no trifling fatality.

Among our captured were Colonel Daniel White and two captains and four lieutenants of the 31st Maine Regiment, and I presume about the same relative loss of men in killed, wounded and missing, was the fate of this regiment.

The rebel loss was also great in view of the number engaged in that conflict. General Bushrod R. Johnson of the Confederate Army, commanding one division, reported August 20, 1864, that his total loss was, in killed, nineteen officers and one hundred and forty-nine men; wounded, thirty-three officers and three hundred and sixty-two men; missing, sixty-six officers and eight hundred and fifty-six men. These figures included those in the fort at the time of the explosion. Total loss of this division was one thousand four hundred and eighty-five. In addition to this, General Mahone had two brigades of his division and Gracie's Brigade also engaged in this battle, all of which suffered severely, the numerical result of which losses are not at my reach. Assuming it to be nearly as great as was Johnson's loss, the rebel casualties approximated two thousand in the whole.

The regiments of the enemy were smaller than ours; one lost one hundred and sixty-three men; another one hundred and one; the 6th Virginia "carried in ninety-eight men and lost eighty-eight; one company — old Company F of Norfolk — losing every man, killed or wounded."

The two right guns of Pegram's Battery, in the fort, were not disturbed by the explosion. The two left guns were thrown out in front of the enemy's works, and only eight men out of twenty-eight men and two officers escaped alive and unhurt. The 18th South Carolina Regiment, on the left of the battery "had four companies blown up or destroyed by the falling earth. The sharpshooters carried in eighty men and lost sixty-four, among them their commander, who, leaping first over the works, fell pierced by eleven bayonet wounds," (so wrote a Confederate staff officer). "Scarcely less was the loss in other regiments," he adds. Serious results those; a victory dearly bought; but a victory, nevertheless, well-earned and highly important in what it saved for Lee and his army.

That such an ignoble failure should follow such well-conceived plans and such valiant work, occasioned profound chagrin, criticism, and even censure. Thinking men lost their temper in discussing the situation and its causes. Some one, or more, had wofully blundered. The blame was tossed about, football like, from one to another, and for a long time, even in some minds beyond the close of the war, the question remained unsolved, and it is, perhaps, not yet removed from the field of doubt and conflicting opinion. There is, however, a consensus of thought upon certain causes of this inglorious failure.

1. That the project did not receive the cordial cooperation of General Meade is found in the fact that the Ninth Corps received no support or aid from other corps in supporting distance during the entire engagement, except one brigade of Ord's Corps, and such aid as came from the artillery, and the latter was efficient.

2. I cannot accept the belief, once current in the army, that the disapproval of Burnside's proposition that his colored troops should lead the assault cooled his ardor in the undertaking, yet his subsequent choice of a leader was very unfortunate, unmilitary and reprehensible.

3. The notable absence from the captured works of any general officer competent to command, able to meet contingencies and changing conditions (Generals Griffin, W. F. Bartlett and Hartranft, each in command of a brigade in different divisions, being the only officers above regimental commanders in the captured works during the day), and give orders made necessary by obstacles not anticipated, was a principal contributing cause. Had there been such officer chaos and partial panic might have been dispelled, and our outnumbering men made available to resist all attacks of an enemy far inferior in numbers.

4. Minor causes are seen in the final preparations and details of the assault, which were not commensurate with the original project and the purpose designed to be accomplished, which causes had more or less weight in the result.

Enough has been said touching the responsibility. The disaster was the subject-matter of inquiry by a Court of Inquiry which by order of the President convened in front of Petersburg, August 5, 1864, and pursued its investigations for several days: and by the Committee on the Conduct of the War. The former held "answerable for the want of success" Generals Burnside, Ledlie, Willcox, Ferrero and Colonel Bliss commanding the First Brigade of the Second Division of the Ninth Corps, measuring out to each more or less censure.

The Committee on Conduct of the War find Meade mainly responsible for "the disastrous results," adding that Burnside's plans and suggestions were "entirely disregarded by a general who had evinced no faith in the successful prosecution of the work, had aided it by no countenance or open approval, and had assumed the entire direction and control only when it was completed and the time had come for reaping any advantages that might be derived from it."

While we may not concur in all of the conclusions of this Committee we cannot ignore the fact that General Meade, by virtue of his presence and rank, did assume "the entire direction and control," as the commanding officer of that army, and, therefore must be held largely responsible. This sentiment was "in the air" at the time, has been endorsed by historians, and was entertained by ex-Confederates whom I met two years ago in Petersburg. Moreover, it is a potent fact that no notice of the findings of the Court of Inquiry at Petersburg was ever taken by the War Department beyond their publication. One historian attributes to Meade the desire to humiliate Burnside for this failure. Nothing is to be gained by urging such argument now, when the curtain of death has been drawn between survivors and many who had part in that battle. Burnside did indeed bid farewell to his command soon after; but, notwithstanding his resignation, his loyalty remained undoubted, and the record of his valor and achievements remained undimmed before his corps, his commander-in-chief, and his country.

Recurring to this *fiasco* I will only add, that when we were marched off the field to the rebel rear, and learned that our

available force of three army corps outnumbered the enemy engaged in a ratio of at least six to one, our chagrin and humiliation was complete. We keenly realized that had there been entire harmony in the plans and preparations, competent, fearless officers in direct charge of the assault, and earnest, full support from other corps on our right and left, supposed to be there for that purpose, the result so enthusiastically anticipated in that early dawn would have been achieved. The Army of the Potomac should have captured Petersburg, July 30, 1864; this done Richmond would have been ours in a short time and the war abbreviated at least six months.



PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN REBEL PRISONS, 1864-1865.

By Major A. R. SMALL.

THE hardpan of a soldier's life was not reached until the door of Libby Prison, or the gate of a stockade, closed upon the unfortunate captive. My regiment (the 16th Maine Infantry) was well represented in the prison-pens of the South, and the survivors bear witness to the inexcusable barbarity of their keepers. It has been truthfully said that cruelty, without pretext or passion, was a brilliant element in the character of prison commandants throughout the South. There is not to be told by me one exceptional voluntary act of mercy or kindness, not one ray of sunshine to relieve the black darkness of that long night of systematic cruelty, during whose tedious hours illiterate, superficial, bombastic and cowardly subordinates, with stolid indifference to suffering, executed the will of their superiors.

It was years ago and yet it all comes home to me like a terrible dream, a nightmare of agony, an ever-present horror, a thing of the past living in the present and reaching out into the future, to sting with its poison every hour of life until death brings welcome relief to physical suffering.

We are told by the press to "modify our conceived opinions" that we were cruelly treated. Go and study the faces of humanity yet living, and read therein whole chapters of prison horrors which a lost intelligence fails to express in words, and let the idiotic stare emphasize every line wrought by suffering, and modify your opinions if you can. Ask the widowed mother who seeing the name of her boy among the paroled prisoners from Salisbury, took her little all and hurried to Annapolis to nurse him back to health. Weary and worn and trembling with excitement, yet glad with expectation, she was shown to

the number indicating his cot. One quick glance and she said, "That is not my James, show me to him quick." The attendant took from a shelf a worn Testament, on the fly-leaf of which was written, "From Mother," and showed it her. It was her boy, and she was laid unconscious beside the skeleton soldier. Oh! the awakening of that mother. It was heart rending to see her smile through her tears as she traced a resemblance to her son, and repeatedly kissed his poor face and hands, and even the hem of his garment. She brushed his hair, smoothed his pillow, and did a thousand little things to hide the anguish of her heart while waiting recognition. How pathetically she pleaded for a word or even a look. And for weeks she patiently watched, as only a mother can, for a return of intelligence, but all in vain. His answer to every question was: "I am hungry, so hungry!" A purse was taken up and I saw that boy sent home a gibbering idiot. "I am so hungry, so thirsty," is still ringing in my ears. Before God I say I cannot in words portray the reality of Southern prison life.

At the capture of the Weldon Railroad, August 18, 1864, I was captured by the rebels, and under fire of our own batteries marched hurriedly toward the enemy's rear. Our artillery opened fire just as we were climbing the fence which enclosed an extensive cornfield contiguous to the woods in which our troops lay. I was both angry and mortified at my capture, and when an exploding shell actually drove a rebel through the fence into "Kingdom Come," I was more than glad. Fear was then as fully developed in a rebel as it was in a Yankee. When I was double-quickened out of range into open ground, I was astonished to find that the enemy's one line in the woods had no infantry support whatever. For obvious reasons I used all my persuasive powers on my captor to allow me to escape. I sincerely believe that he had it in mind, for looking me full in the face, he said: "I am damned sorry you did not capture me instead of I you. I am heart-sick of this war." Seeing me bareheaded he offered me a gray cap to wear until we should reach the quartermaster's tent near Petersburg, when

I would have to give it up. I was not especially pleased to don any part of a rebel uniform, but a drenching rain drove me to it. It seems needless to add that I was again left without a head covering.

The rebel quartermaster's department was that day enriched by my new hat, rubber coat, and an elegant silver corps badge, presented to me a few days before by Colonel Farnham. I saved my watch by dropping it through the arm-scy of my vest. As it left my hand and made its way down, with a short prayer at every stop, I instinctively thought of the future, of the suffering in store for me, if penniless. I thanked God for that watch when I felt it wearing into the flesh during my unwilling march.

I was led like a lamb to an alert, but inferior-looking officer mounted on a sorrel horse and wearing stars on the collar of his badly fitting coat, who, I was told by my guard, was "Billy Mahone." General Mahone was possibly in command, as he was exceedingly anxious to learn just what he was facing. He was a cadaverous, dyspeptic-looking man, with nerves all over him and an eye as cold as a glacier. "What corps do you belong to — what batteries — what corps — any cavalry — is Grant there — who commands?" were questions fired at me in rapid succession, and were answered in these exact words: "General, you are too good an officer to expect correct answers." Smiling with the lower muscles of his face, he motioned me to the rear.

The morale of the Gray must have suffered a relapse from my preconceived opinions of discipline under Lee to allow the private who clung to me like a brother to tell an officer who ordered him to go back to the front to "go to hell." I felt like saying, "Keep nearer to the front and you 'uns will all get there soon."

Under a strong guard, with loaded rifles and bayonets fixed, several hundred of the boys in blue, first stripped of outward adornments, started on an excursion to Richmond. Through the principal streets of Petersburg we marched in good order,

if not in triumph. The walks were lined with old men, decrepit women and boys, who vied with each other in flinging insults and venom. The worst talk and the most objectionable epithets came from the women. They spat upon us, laughed at us, and called us "the scum of hell."

Our first night was passed in an old out-building, a sort of shed, strongly flavored with Africa. In the black darkness of the night, I felt a hand light on my shoulder and glide towards my watch-pocket. Thoroughly awakened, I grabbed something tangible and held on, when a whispered warning came, "Keep quiet, friends are around." This particular friend appeared anxious to furnish me with greenbacks and directions how to escape, asserting himself to be a Northern man there to aid us. On his asking me if I had a gold watch, negotiations were suspended and I requested him to move on, and he was kept moving, until the hole called a door allowed him to crawl out, with a kick in the rear.

Stealing by the officials was systematic. First our captors took visible plunder — rubber coats, hats and spurs; then we were searched for orders, letters, or any scrap of paper which might possibly index a military secret.

On arriving at Libby prison, gentlemen could not have been treated more courteously than we were when asked to announce our names for register. Major Thomas P. Turner, the commandant, asked us sweetly if we desired to deposit in the office safe, watches, jewels, or other valuables, assuring us that he would give receipts for same which would redeem our property on our release. He was not at all anxious for us to do it, for reasons very soon after most signally manifested.

Immediately ordered into line in a room adjoining the reception room, we were called by name, one by one, to the rear of the prison, where, out of sight, a little puppy named Ross stripped to the skin every man who denied the possession of money or valuables. Not a garment escaped inspection, and yet I saved one hundred and fifty dollars in the waistband of my trousers and other places, which helped to mitigate the suffering of my mess later on.

One by one we went out and none came back. Only after the last one had reached the second floor of the famous prison and saw the stairs pulled up after him, did he learn of the indignity offered his comrades.

Libby, so often written about, was a perfect paradise in comparison with other prisons and stockades farther south. The officers' quarters on the second and third floors in the south end were kept decently clean by negroes, who swept the floors every morning and washed them twice during the week. James River water for drinking and bathing was abundant in a large tank set in the kitchen — a room twelve by twenty feet, in the east end of the second story. The kitchen was furnished with three old cook stoves and a limited supply of cooking utensils for those who preferred to prepare their own food. I was at first surprised at this, but was soon only too glad to take my turn as kitchen scullion, for human nature rebelled at scant rations of tough meat boiled dry and rancid soup on which floated bugs and white worms. Our first meal, after three days fasting, consisted of eight ounces of corn bread and a plate of vile bean soup flavored with rancid bacon. This was our regular fare for weeks.

Those fortunate enough to safely secrete money fared well so long as it lasted. The officers organized a commissary department with Colonel C. H. Hooper, 24th Massachusetts, as chief, who divided us into messes of from six to twenty. Each mess chose its own officers, consisting of commissary, secretary and treasurer. The treasurer was not required to give bonds. My mess was numbered six, composed of Captains Fred R. Kinslee and John Hutchins, Lieutenants Luke R. Tidd, C. H. Chapman, Charles W. Hanson, and George A. Barker of the 39th Massachusetts; Captains Joseph O. Lord and John D. Conley, Lieutenants William H. Broughton, Atwood Fitch, and Wilmot H. Chapman and Adjutant A. R. Small of the 16th Maine, and D. R. Sage of the 144th New York. Later on, Captain Thomas J. C. Bailey, 17th U. S. Infantry, Captain William Cook, 9th colored troops, and Captain Daniel R. Boice, of the 3d New Jersey Cavalry, joined the mess.

Greenbacks could be exchanged for rebel currency. One dollar of our money would buy from five to fifteen of theirs. Thousands of dollars changed hands, and it must have surprised our keepers to know where and how so much money had been secreted. On referring to my diary, I find that I paid three dollars per pound for flour, two dollars for rice, and ten dollars for a quart of sorghum; one-half peck of potatoes cost me seven dollars and fifty cents; two dollars and fifty cents bought three pounds of coarse salt; seven dollars one-quarter of pepper, and three dollars a quart of beans. Good tobacco cost two dollars and fifty cents per pound. These were expensive luxuries, in which those who had money indulged. My mess account shows an expenditure of \$1,275 in six months. Later on the cash supply being exhausted, we disposed of personal effects piece by piece. Inside of six months we looked like Rip Van Winkle.

So anxious were we to get "the news," that we subscribed for the Richmond papers at the expense of our stomachs. We got mighty little comfort, however, from the headlines of the *Enquirer* and the *Dispatch*. It was not agreeable reading that "the Union army had been terribly whipped — thousands killed and wounded — the North rebelling and success of the Confederate arms assured."

The commandant of Libby, Major Thomas P Turner, might possibly have been a gentleman under favorable circumstances. It would be treason to common-sense to assert that Dick Turner, the keeper, was other than an unmitigated scoundrel in the pay of an irresponsible faction calling itself a government. He had been a Baltimore bootblack, a heeler-in at caucuses, with a heart blacker than any brogans he ever cleaned with a brush. He took exquisite pleasure in tormenting us, in subjecting us to little, stinging annoyances. He lied to us for pure love of that fascinating vice. His extreme vanity was often wounded, and then he was like a hornet let loose in a campmeeting. Dick Turner strove for an ideal which one day became something more than a conception, and his

cruel masters were satisfied. At the close of the war I had the pleasure of seeing him in one of the dungeons, a sort of horse-stall, in the basement of Libby. The artificial polish was all gone, and he shone resplendent in all his natural ugliness. Either Turner would have been excellent fruit for missionaries to gather.

September 28, 1864, General Butler attacked Fort Harrison, Chapin's Farm, and captured it on the thirtieth. The heavy cannonading and bursting of shells less than six miles away set us wild with hope, and the stay-at-homes of Richmond wild with terror. Men and women climbed to the house-tops, and from cupolas and roofs looked anxiously in the direction of the firing. Officials and orderlies ran to and fro. The bells rang, the long roll sounded, and soon down the streets of Richmond marched, rather waltzed and straggled — the *elite*, the ragtag and bobtail, the *dernier ressort* of the capital city, some mounted, some in uniform, some in linen dusters — all jubilant. The following day saw this conglomerate mass of chivalry come marching home in the rain with drooping feathers, and myself, along with three hundred and twenty-five officers and several hundred enlisted men, en route for the South.

At three o'clock A. M., October 2, in a drizzling rain, we marched across the James and boarded box- and cattle-cars at Manchester. United States haversacks were given us with three days' rations, *i. e.*, three square inches of corn bread and twelve ounces of meat — hardly sufficient for a lunch. On the road, officers disposed of personal property at seemingly fabulous prices in Confederate currency. Some swapped shoes, knives and buttons, receiving to boot more rebel shin-plasters than they knew what to do with. Captain Kinslee, 39th Massachusetts, sold to the engineer of an up-train, crossed at Clover Station, his cherished meerschaum pipe, for two hundred dollars, and generously gave me fifty dollars for my mess should we become separated. Those 39th fellows were true grit, and all were royally good comrades. Trull, Kinslee, Hutchins, Tidd, Barker, Chapman, Hosea, Hanson — all showed the same

brave, hopeful spirit in captivity that they did in the army.

At every stop of the train, hucksters, both black and white, would crowd around for a chance to dicker. One old darky had four sweet potato pies in one hand and a peck basket in the other. "What do you ask for the basket?" inquired Conley. "Golly, Colonel," answered the black, "reckon couldn't 'spose of dat ar, 'brung dat to put de blue greenbacks in."

Arriving at Greensboro, N. C., our Pullman cars were side-tracked to await the up-train from Atlanta, which soon rounded the curve and came to a stop directly against us. In a worn passenger car, which was neither better nor worse than the only other car in the train, sat Jefferson Davis, once a central figure in the politics of this country, honored of all men, with prospects as brilliant as that of any living American, North or South, with Mrs. Davis and General Beauregard.

No man could have sat for a photograph with a sadder face than that worn by Davis. Seemingly oblivious to his surroundings, he was possibly seeking a solution of the terrible difficulties facing him. His face expressed the agony of the grip which held him. I wondered if he was moved by any feeling of remorse or regret for his suicidal folly. Whatever he may have felt it was evident that he imparted none of his feelings to Mrs. Davis, who, well dressed and exceedingly comely in appearance, came to the platform of the car, and looking us over said, "Gentlemen, I am exceedingly glad to see you; I hope to see more of you." Was this sarcasm? Those of our number who wore hats raised them without any remark whatever.

General Beauregard stood near Mrs. Davis. His manner was nervous, restless, and disagreeable. He followed the first woman of the Confederacy into the car, turned back a seat, and seated himself, facing her. Their conversation might or might not have been interesting. To me that car appeared like a coach of mourners en route to a funeral.

The natives of Greensboro were at heart loyal, but the force of events drove them into the rebellion. I saw but few civilians on the street, and looked in vain for the motherly form of a

woman or the sweet face of a child. The village was silent as a graveyard. Neither cat, dog, nor even a pig, greeted us.

Immediately on the departure of Davis' special train north we were ordered to bivouac for the night on a green plot near the station. Surrounded by a guard, we alternately chewed the cuds of discomfort and reflection. Desperately hungry, we rejoiced when from a storehouse near by came a detail bringing several boxes, and left them in our midst. Their contents were quickly distributed and the result as quickly defined in scientific profanity. No human being could possibly penetrate with ordinary teeth that rice bread, baked to a hardness equaled only by petrified wood. The cakes, the size of government hardtack, were of no use as food, and from the hands of indignant men went skimming through the air in all directions.

Several enlisted men from a body of troops encamped near by came and looked us over, but with kindly eyes. One, noticing a peculiar badge I wore, spoke to the guard, and immediately started on a run for his camp. He returned shortly and placed in my hands a package, which on opening I found contained hot biscuit, spread with real butter, broiled steak, and corn dodgers. The way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and I have loved that man ever since. He gave me the Masonic grip as he took my note addressed to Colonel Tilden, "To succor J. B. Hobson, 1st North Carolina Sharpshooters, if captured."

Captain C. had not got over his hankering for "cocktails," hence when a grayback winked several drinks at him he passed over a five dollar scrip to be invested in applejack. The Southerner looked honest and sympathetic when he went on the run for the appetizer, yet the captain, if living, is still waiting his return.

We left Greensboro with regret. Our progress was slow. The road was sadly out of repair, rails were bent and broken, and our passage exceedingly dangerous. The rolling-stock was worn out and fuel scarce. Often on an ascending grade the train would stop and sometimes run back in spite of brakes.

The train-men replenished the tender with fence-rails and themselves with corn whisky. The fire-box was crammed with pitch knots, the heat became fervent, the steam hissed, the engine creaked and groaned at every joint when the throttle was pulled wide open at the head of a long, steep grade, and down the serpentine track with their living freight went twenty-five cars into the darkness at a fearful rate. We were dashed from side to side, thrown down and piled in heaps amid groaning and cursing. During that perilous ride several of our number saw their opportunity and leaped from the train, preferring the risk to an indefinite stay in a stockade.

The guard fired several shots after them, but they must have gone wide of their mark.

SALISBURY STOCKADE.

Salisbury, N. C., was our objective point, and late in the evening of October 14, 1864, three hundred and seventy-five United States officers and several hundred enlisted men were marched through the accursed gates of a stockade, which for long weary weeks never opened but to let through the dead-cart with its terrible burden of silent, fleshless remnants of humanity.

At first the old cotton factories enclosed within the fence were used as a sort of slop-jar, into which the Confederacy dumped deserters and political nondescripts, the scum of a most disreputable government. This coterie of villains soon took the name of "Muggers," a synonym for thieves and murderers. They seemed to have the white card to rob and kill the Northern captives afterwards sent there.

Led by General Joseph Hayes of the Second Army Corps, we were forced up the filthy passage-way to the monitor room under the roof, step by step, through nameless filth and over objects emitting an intolerable stench. The horrors of that first night can never be told. The fiendish "Muggers" from below crept in upon us and succeeded in robbing several before

the alarm was given. Two officers, stationed at the door with billets of wood, will never be held accountable for the crushing blows through a man's skull as he attempted to force his way in. With a fearful yell he fell backward, and I heard him bound from stair to stair into what I hoped was the bottomless pit.

Here commenced the suffering which filled the length, breadth and height of our lives, and it sat in faithful guard over us until we were paroled. In the early morning the officer of the day was called, who denied responsibility and called the commandant. General Hayes, ignoring that officer's extended hand, silently pointed to the filth-drenched hall and staircase, and with a look which brought the color of shame to the commandant's face demanded larger and better quarters for officers of the United States Army. The general's courageous words, "That ten thousand fresh prisoners would not bear for another hour such indignities," had their effect. The morrow saw the prison yard extended to cover some twelve acres, enclosing four small log houses. Into these we were admitted, and yet there was not standing-room for half our number. Although filled with vermin, they were preferable to the factory.

Albert D. Richardson, of the *New York Tribune*, shared our quarters for a while. I shall always see his pallid face, greasy coat, and threadbare trousers. Junius Henri Browne, war correspondent of the same paper, enjoyed misery with us. His cheerful heart and bright smile were better than sunshine, and warmed into life the waning hopes of many a poor devil. He and Richardson crawled to salvation without leave soon after we left Salisbury for Danville, Va.

Armed sentries paced an imaginary line which was drawn around the yard within ten feet of the fence and between the officers and enlisted men. These lines were significant, and we kept away from them, for the brutal guard would fire at men passing within ten feet of his beat, as a pastime. On October 16, I saw Lieutenant Davis of a New York regiment fall, shot through the heart while standing near this imaginary line.

When those scoundrels at Richmond drew the order for the specific government of prison-yards, and there went flashing over the wires the command to establish an invisible boundary, towards which none should approach on the penalty of death, none knew of the horrible results that were to set vibrating the sympathy of the world for the victims of the "dead line,"—invisible then, invisible now, yet forever marking the bounds where compassion ceased and murder began. The swift passage of the bullet, as it sped on its mission of death, set in motion the air, and its vibrations grew into ripples, and its ripples into waves which overwhelmed the loyal hearts of the North with anguish. The "Confederacy" has passed away, prison yards are rich in grain, the keepers are dead, but the order has passed into history.

In this prison pen were ten thousand captives, and all the water for this ten thousand came from two or three ordinary wells. In ten days the suffering became so intense that two worn shovels were thrown to us, and we were told to dig, which we did like beavers day and night. Fifteen feet down we came to water. An old bucket resembling a nail cask, and a rope, were thrown to us, and a windlass was quickly made from green firewood. Mud and water was scooped up, settled in dippers, and eagerly drank. At the end of a week the fiend in charge came with a guard and took away the shovels, saying, "It is by order of the government."

Many a day I was so thirsty that my ears would ring, and my tongue almost protruded from my mouth, and yet men have had the impudence to ask me, a representative of ten thousand sufferers, to "modify my conceived opinions" that I was cruelly treated. Is it surprising that the daily death-rate of the enlisted men reached seventy, from thirst, starvation and exposure?

The poor fellows burrowed in the ground without blankets, barefooted and bareheaded, and many with nothing on but trousers and shirt which they had worn for months. After a rain the shelves upon which they lay were but a few inches above

the water, which floated offal full of maggots and vermin. Sometimes two or three days would pass before the dead cart came to take away the dead to be dumped in a common receptacle, that is, in a shoal trench a short distance from the stockade. It was a scene full of human stories living out their last chapters without a shadow of romance.

My life here was full of regret for the Turners. I would have taken any amount of Turner in exchange for Alexander. I shall never forget the gloom of that prison yard with its living horrors at flood tide for months. The daily pictures of untold suffering pass before me like a panorama, each succeeding picture more expressive of misery than the last. The atmosphere was so impregnated with the horrible stench which arose from the offal of thousands of men that my stomach would not always retain the little food I swallowed. Every foot of ground was full of vermin and reeking with nameless filth, and on this filth-glutted soil starved men walked, and slept, and died, without clothing and no other covering than the sky overhead. I saw men walking to and fro, with heads bowed and eyes searching the ground for a stray bone or morsel of food dropped perchance from some weak hand. I saw men with clasped hands and streaming eyes praying for the dear ones at home into whose loving eyes they would never again look. I saw men in delirium beat themselves, tear their hair and curse God, and I saw, shuddering as I looked, the dead cart on its morning rounds, in which God's images were tiered up like sticks of wood.

The sunshine brought no gladness to the hearts of these suffering men. They were past help and had ceased to hope. I had never believed that any race of men on God's earth could be so cruel, so utterly devoid of human feelings as were our keepers. To me the boasted chivalry, the culture, the hospitality and open-heartedness of the South are all sham and humbug. I will not censure our men for taking the oath of allegiance to the rebel government, as a life-preserving act; but I glory in the loyalty of those men who preferred a probable death to

dishonor. In Richmond I saw an officer in full uniform of the United States Army go out of the prison and in plain sight of us swear fealty to the cause of our enemies. I was told that he had been a prisoner for two years, that he twice escaped, and was twice recaptured. No doubt he saw in his act his one chance to success in a last attempt to escape and reach our lines.

Despair, horror and death were so long my companions in that pestilential air that at times I almost doubted God's goodness. On sleepless nights, when I watched the full moon in its splendor, and the stars in their brilliancy light up the wan faces and shivering forms of those poor fellows forsaken by their government, I questioned if God too had forsaken them; if the loving Savior with pierced feet and hands had an eye of pity for his brothers pierced through and through with wounds, who cried to him for succor. The bright sunlight, the sweet songs of birds seemed like mockery, and the Christian work of our chaplains appeared like a farce. I record these things simply to show the withering effect of prison life upon one's spiritual nature.

Soon after arriving at Salisbury we commenced to organize an army corps under command of that accomplished officer, General Hayes. General —— was assigned to the first division and a Massachusetts colonel to the second. So perfect was the organization that every enlisted man over the line knew his immediate commander. Codes of signals were adopted and quickly learned. Orders were written, wrapped around a stone, and after dark thrown far over the heads of the sentries pacing the dead line.

An attack on the guard, on the gate, on the batteries outside, the commissary, the railroad station and the city, was planned for October 17. We felt reasonably sure of success; but the afternoon before the attack was to be made, Lieutenant Gardiner, in sending a last command of caution, threw his ball too swiftly, when his note becoming detached fell fluttering at the feet of the guard. He immediately called the corporal of

the guard, and he the sergeant, and so on, until the officer of the day came, who, it was said, was the only one of the number who could read.

The scene was worthy the skill of a painter. The sharp call warned the camp that something unusual was transpiring. The officers on one side and the enlisted men on the other stood as if paralyzed. Every eye was rooted on that little group of rebels in the center. Like a flash came to the minds of hundreds the thought to dash upon that knot of rebels, hold them as hostages, seize their guns and break the stockade, when like a trumpet rang out the call, "Turn out the guard! Turn out the camp! Man the guns!" and the critical moment for action had passed.

The parapet bristled with muskets and black mouths of cannon faced us from either corner of the yard. Then began a search for Lieutenant Gardiner. No one knew him,—he did not even know himself when addressed. All the next day was spent in trying to spot him. Finally we were formed in one rank and the roll called. On answering to his name each officer was passed through the gate. We all went out taking with us Hugh Conway, a private of Company H, of my regiment. For a long time he was like a misplaced and forgotten package.

To my surprise we were marched to the station and taken thence to Danville, Va.

DANVILLE, VA.

Ten o'clock P. M., October 20, saw us quartered in the second and third stories of a cotton factory. The first floor was used during the winter as a promenade in which a limited number exercised daily in turn. Our sanitary arrangements were limited to a wooden trough for lavatory, and one other institution more deplorable than any army sink. All the water we used was brought in pails from the river daily, by a detail of prisoners.

The personal property of mess six, numbering thirteen, inventoried six tin plates, ten pewter spoons, two dippers, seven case-knives, one fork, three jack-knives, one set of checkers

made in Libby, and an old stove hearth on which we fried our delicious flapjacks. These fritters were made of corn-bread and river water, sometimes flavored with dried-apple juice and pepper

We took turns in cooking. Captain Lord became an expert. Captains Conley and Cook swore they would starve before they would do scullions' work.

It was humiliating to see an United States officer with an old stove-hearth under one arm, a handful of splinters under the other, and a rusty lobster can full of corn-mush start for the back yard to prepare his dinner. I felt honored but cried with shame, when a live colonel sent his compliments and requested a loan of my stove-hearth.

Yankee blood is always practical ; even when in prison, we would live, hence we cooked. It would have made Marion Harland or Madame Parloa green with envy to see the dishes evolved from corn-dodger, dried apple and sorghum, and their hair stand on end to see us swallow some of the concoctions of our mess.

Several messes clubbed together and bought an old cook stove with two legs, and some funnel of different sizes. The stove was set up and the funnel run through the window. When the wind was right we were happy, but as that particular window was in keeping with our other misfortunes, we were soon most beautifully bronzed. Every hour, day and night, that superannuated relic of a stove did service. It was covered with dilapidated kettles, old tin coffee pots (minus handles and noses), tin pails, and lobster cans. A dish once on, the owner must watch it with untiring vigilance until his mess was cooked, or lose his turn, which came as often as he could steal a chance. His back turned for an instant, off came his pot and on went another. As one hundred and fifty or more officers practised cooking on that apology for a range, it required ingenuity of an unknown quantity to have meals at regular hours.

Very little reading matter was obtainable after we left Libby. A few books and some old back numbers of monthlies were

brought us by the Rev. Dr. Hall, who occasionally preached to us on the Sabbath. This gentleman furnished some with stockings and underclothes, for which they were very grateful. A few of our number, with religion sixteen ounces to the pound, found none too much time to study the Scripture, hence games had no fascinating power for them. A large number devoted hours to chess and backgammon, but the ungodly — the majority — killed time and escaped insanity with cards, whist and euchre being the favorite games.

Many developed a wonderful mechanical talent, which was shown by hundreds of ornaments made from bone and wood. Many crosses, rings, and pins, were artistic and most beautifully chased. Busts were carved from bricks taken from the walls of the building, checkers with monograms and raised figures, Masonic charms and emblems, altogether enough to stock a respectable museum.

The dickering qualities displayed by the officials wherever I was confined dispelled all my youthful illusions of the chivalrous sons of the sunny South. The expressions of avarice and duplicity on the face of an average Southerner would discount the meanest qualities ever ascribed to a Down East Yankee. Every day and often into the night, officials in full uniform would haggle for an exchange of anything we had, for a tin pot, pint of sorghum, or a vermin-filled blanket stolen from some captive.

Greenbacks, jack-knives, spurs, boots, watches, rings, buttons, badges, and even toothpicks, were commodities of traffic. As a last resort for possession, these fiends would take by force, if they couldn't steal, what was not otherwise attainable. Boots were a quick commodity and brought one hundred and fifty dollars. Captain Conley's pride in a pair of nice boots lasted until his luxurious habits of smoking demanded a sacrifice. The officer of the guard, who by the way looked like a Malay pirate, offered one hundred Confederate dollars and finally a pair of good shoes also for the boots, which was accepted. The cash was paid, and with tears the captain gave up his boots.

After waiting two weeks, a package was passed into the prison addressed to Captain Conley. "My shoes," cried Conley. He quickly tore off the wrapper, and for an hour sat and swore at two old army brogans, numbers seven and twelve and both for one foot !

Prison life had its different shades of effect upon the captives. A few months was sufficient to develop the natural man, or rather bring him to the surface. Men won rank here and men lost what they never should have possessed. It was astonishing how a life like ours would change the facial expression. I remember three officers, one a Yankee from Vermont, one an Irishman from New York, and one a Dutchman from Ohio, who messed together over against the wall opposite me. When they came to Danville they were as distinct in feature and personnel as men could be. They became homesick and disheartened. They lost all interest in everything and would sit in the same attitude hour after hour and day after day with their backs against the wall, and their eyes striking the floor at my feet. It grew upon me that they were gradually being merged into one man with three distinct bodies. They looked just alike. Truly I couldn't tell them apart ; and they were slowly dying of nostalgia.

It gave me the nightmare to lie down in front of these men and I resolved that I would break the spell which held them over the grave. So one morning I fortified myself with the stimulus of corn-bread and crust-coffee, and took a position just in front of them and looked from one to the other repeatedly, until the Dutchman exclaimed, "Got in Himmel : Vot for you shoost look like dot on me ?" Paying no attention, I concentrated my gaze yet stronger on the trio, when the Vermonter asked what in h—l I wanted ? This aroused the Irishman, who yelled an interrogation point at me. My medicine was working well, but, not being very strong, I feared lest my strength fail before the cure was effected. By sheer will power I forced both the Vermonter and the Irishman to their feet. The Dutchman was fast sinking back into stolidity when I spat

full into his face. The insult worked like magic, and I just ran for my life around the room with Dutchy after me. He gave it up, but the warm current of blood which I had started did not again stagnate.

When the three cooled off, I made them a morning call and explained matters. Perhaps they didn't believe all I said, but they forgave me,— and lived.

There joined us in September two men of equal physical strength, of the same age, full of life and courage. On the same diet, and with like surroundings, one, Lieutenant Knower of the 4th New York Artillery, left the prison erect, with an elastic step and joined his command apparently none the worse for his experience. The other, with bent form and blank face, tottered feebly down-stairs, out into the fresh air and bright sunshine, without the least show of appreciation.

I am sorry to say that military rank was soon ignored by the majority of our officers in prison No. 3 ; that selfishness and dishonesty added much to our cup of humiliation and suffering ; but I know much should be forgiven men who from exposure and starvation had almost lost their individuality.

Only a slight provocation would cause a quarrel like that between Lieutenant H. and Captain McG. over a few rusty fruit cans, in which the former's shirt was torn to shreds. As it was the only one he had, and the balance of his wardrobe consisted of a well ventilated pair of trousers, he was to be pitied.

Note should be made of the manly acts of some, and of the Christian character maintained under the most adverse and depressing influences. General Hayes, who closely resembled our much-loved Chamberlain, especially so in his eminently courteous bearing, several times severely rebuked those who indulged in profane and obscene language. Chaplains Fowler and Emerson, Captain James Stewart, 146th Pennsylvania, Captain William Cook, and Captain Henry S. Burrage, 36th Massachusetts, seemed never to forget their Christian and moral obligations.

I was not personally acquainted with either one of these gentlemen, and was influenced only in a general way, but I have never ceased to feel grateful for the breath of pure atmosphere blown by them through the clouds of profanity that enveloped me like a polluted garment. I believe their influence saved many from moral collapse.

All sorts of makeshifts were adopted to cover our persons as decency demanded. When captured I was the proud possessor of a new staff suit, sleeves and cap ornamented with gold lace. At the end of five months my most intimate friends would have failed to recognize me in the disreputable looking tramp who one morning sat on the floor in a nude state and robbed the ends of his trousers to resew them. Not until I reached Annapolis did I shake off those trousers,—I could not, for after sewing up the legs when on, I couldn't get my feet through. I bore it like a soldier, for it was the regulation uniform.

On November 8, 1864, we voted for president of the United States with the following result: Abraham Lincoln received two hundred and sixty-seven votes, and General George B. McClellan ninety-one.

In December, life was so unbearable, and prospects of exchange so delusive, that about seventy of the most courageous, or most wanting in judgment, made an attempt to break prison and escape, and miserably failed. Unconscious of the attempt to be made I was, with five others, walking the lower floor for exercise, when I beheld an officer seize the guard stationed at the yard exit by the throat, while another took his gun. At the same moment Colonel Raulston, 24th New York Cavalry, tried to choke into silence the guard by the stairs, but his grip was too weak, and the brave fellow, in spite of threats, shouted, "Turn out the guard!" which cry being repeated outside, all those on the floor were immediately covered by rifles thrust through the sashless windows.

I have outlived the sensation of that moment, but I was never more conscious of being suspended between the positive and negative poles of destruction than when I caught a glimpse of

eternity through the black muzzle of a gun held within six feet of my breast. The others were as helplessly exposed when Colonel Smith, the commandant, cried, "Cease firing," but not quickly enough to save Colonel Raulston, who, shot through the bowels, ran up two flights of stairs. He died December 15, five days afterward.

Colonel Smith immediately came inside, ordered a number of officers into close confinement, and coolly told us that a keg of powder was buried under the prison, and if another attempt was made to escape he would "blow us all to hell."

December 25, there were present two brigadier-generals, four colonels, eight lieutenant-colonels, sixteen majors, eighty-six captains, and three hundred and twenty-eight lieutenants, making a total of four hundred and forty-four.

These equally divided into two rooms would give us six by eight-tenths feet of space each, in which to walk or lie down. With thousands of others I suffered untold horrors, but I lived through it all. If I were to live a thousand years I couldn't coin a vocabulary of invectives strong enough to denounce the cruelty, inhumanity and barbarity of our keepers, the outcome of the underlying principle which had controlled one section of this country since the Declaration of Independence.

A strong influence, inspired doubtless by Junius Henri Browne, was brought to bear upon our government at Washington, which resulted in negotiations for a general exchange of prisoners, and the welcome news reached us February 15, 1864.

We left Danville on the seventeenth, and reached our old quarters in Libby at two o'clock A. M., the eighteenth. I had the pleasure of occupying my old room — *i.e.*, a space six feet by two on the second floor near a post. Here I shed the one threadbare blanket which so long had covered Captain Conley and myself.

The thought of going home was overpowering, and we alternately laughed and cried. Did I cry? I couldn't help it; I was like a child. At this late day some, with a great show of

dignity, will tell you how stoically, how coolly, they met the change that came to them. Don't believe it! They lie.

February 20, I signed the parole. I believe I would have signed anything without the least intention of keeping it. While waiting for the flag-of-truce boat in which to depart, there came into Libby Prison a number of rebels just paroled from Camp Douglas. They were on their way home and came in to see us in order to confirm their belief that the South treated their prisoners as well, if not better, than the North did theirs.

They stood silent and looked us over, and one of the number cried like a child. The faces of all expressed sympathy, and their language the strongest indignation and the deepest disgust for their home government. It warmed my heart to hear such good English, so well handled in our behalf. Perhaps it ought to modify my opinion of the South.

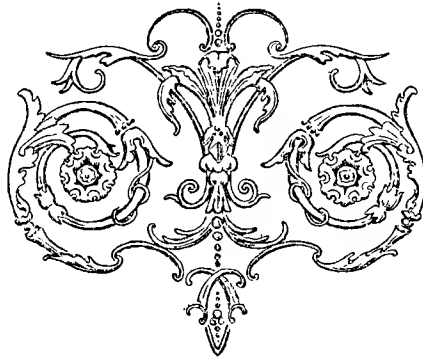
At eight o'clock in the morning of February 22, the door of Libby prison opened to us for the last time, and we went forth free men. Slowly and painfully we made our way to the steamer waiting for us in the James. I fell to the ground repeatedly, but I "got there." Backed up against the smokestack for warmth, I immediately went to sleep. When I opened my eyes the steamer was going back to Richmond; I might have jumped overboard had not Captain Lord's happy face changed my thought, and then I remembered how crooked the James River was.

At Cox's Landing we crossed the dividing line between a mildewed country, with its barbarous life and customs, and our own God-fearing and progressive land. I then came to the unsanctified conclusion, which I still hold, that if rebel prison life were perpetuated, hell would be a superfluous institution. At 11.30 we caught sight of "Old Glory" at Aiken's Landing, and soon boarded the "George Leary" for Annapolis.

We were several times served with a light lunch of ham, bread, and coffee, also one-half ration of whisky, while en route. I think the whisky came first, and those who drank the portion

refused by others, in addition to their own, had no need of the lunch. The warm welcome we received at Annapolis, the earnest manifestations for our comfort, and the sweet words of sympathy, filled our eyes with tears. That long, linen-draped, well-filled table, at which we were seated, shall I ever forget it? How kindly were we cautioned to control our appetites; and earnestly warned of the fatal consequences of too free indulgence. Alas! for self-confidence and non-resistance, several of our number were soon laid under the green sod at Annapolis.

After thirty years it may be that I should erase the criticisms more or less bitter in their character, recorded during my captivity. Sometimes I wish I could forget it all, and again I rejoice that it is indelibly stamped into my being, that my sons cannot but inherit, along with their father's loyalty, some of the conclusions of a life spent in helping to make secure, lasting, and forever free, the government under which they are living.



AN INCIDENT ON THE COAST OF MAINE IN 1861.

By Major CHARLES H. BOYD.

THESE personal recollections which are now offered for your entertainment do not rise to the dignity of a "paper" in the ordinary acceptation of our Loyal Legion histories, but may be of some little interest to those who make their homes in the shelter of the Pine Tree.

The incident, thus local and trivial in itself, simply emphasizes the fact that, even so far distant as these homes of ours most fortunately were from the theater of actual hostilities, the tide of war sent some of its smaller waves thus far; and that, possibly, the first Confederate flag captured by the forces of the United States was taken upon the waters of Maine's most eastern bay.

In the spring of 1861, when the destinies of the nation were hanging in the balance, when loyal men were taking counsel together and girding themselves for the great struggle then at hand, the United States coast survey parties under Captain C. O. Boutelle were transferred from the South Carolina station to Passamaquoddy Bay, Maine. The active prosecution of the survey of these waters was begun so soon as the opening of the season permitted and continued until October, when the whole "outfit" was ordered back to South Carolina with the Port Royal expedition under Admiral DuPont.

For the hydrography of the Passamaquoddy the United States schooner "Arago" was assigned with Robert Platt, now a lieutenant, United States Navy, and a companion of this order, as executive officer. Robert L. Meade, now major in the Marine Corps of the navy, was one of the aids attached. I was in charge of the triangulation party and W. H. Dennis that of the topography, with our quarters on shore at Eastport. Captain Boutelle and the other officers, then our comrades, have passed the wide river and joined the great majority.

In the latter part of August, orders came to Captain Boutelle directing him to reenforce the crew of the "Arago" with the shore parties, to cruise in the mouth of the Bay of Fundy and intercept some Confederate ships, then at sea, which had sailed from England with the supposed intention of making a stop at St. John, New Brunswick, doing this for the purpose of obtaining more definite information as to the newly established blockade, before making the attempt to run into their home ports. In accordance with these instructions the necessary plans were at once made.

Lookouts from the vessel were posted upon commanding headlands, with orders to signalize to each other, until our vessel was reached, the position of every ship coming within their range, and thus, the "Arago" by keeping one of them continually in sight, covered both passage ways of Grand Menan. The schooner "Arago" was a fine, stanch little craft, with a large enough spread of canvas to drive her through the water with very good speed; for armament she carried two brass guns, one of them rifled, and an abundant equipment of small arms. Her complement was now six officers and a very active and efficient crew of blue-jackets, quite a number of whom had been enlisted in Portland. Their familiar faces it is a pleasure to greet among our respected fellow citizens to-day. Three fine ships were soon anchored in Eastport harbor with our prize crews on board,—the "Orizimbo," the "Express" and the "Alice Ball." It is the capture of the last two named to which I would now refer

A fine day, and no ships in sight, greeted our little ship's company on the morning of Saturday, August 31. These tidings afforded our captain the opportunity we all much desired, to show to the kind people of Eastport how thoroughly appreciated had been the many hospitalities received at their hands, and enabled him to invite a party of ladies and gentlemen on board the "Arago" for a sail upon the waters of their most picturesque bay. My recollection is about fifty came off, that we got under way just before luncheon, running out towards the eastern entrance.

When off the northwestern end of Campobello, we suddenly got the message that a ship was outside the White Horse. Then, for a few minutes, it looked very much as if our sailing party, so well under way, would have to be postponed, and our guests at once landed upon English soil. The conditions thus presented were embarrassing to say the least, but Captain Boutelle was equal to the emergency, and after consulting with Captain Robinson, Royal Navy, Mr. Bion Bradbury and others of our guests whose families were present, and at their strongly expressed desire to see the capture, concluded to run the risk. And so the chase was begun with the quarter-deck covered with ladies. In a few minutes the broad Passamaquoddy was open before us and there, some three miles away, was a large ship under full sail, apparently bound for St. John. The wind was fresh and quite a sea running. All sail was now made upon the "Arago." The ship soon gave evidence of having discovered the long, low, suspicious looking schooner rapidly working to windward and coming up with her. When about two miles distant a blank cartridge was fired and our ensign set. The ship's response to this intimation that a closer acquaintance was desired was to run out studding-sails, change her course to bring the wind more nearly free, and run for the open sea, apparently hoping to outrun the schooner when off the wind; but in vain, the "Arago" had much the better legs. Being now within easy range a shot was thrown across her bow. The excitement among our fair guests can be better imagined than described. Rarely had such a chase for such a prize vexed the waters of fair Passamaquoddy. We soon ran to within a mile and off the ship's quarter, when Mr. Meade, I think, was ordered to send a shot near enough to carry conviction that this was not altogether a picnic,—certainly not for the ship. The rifle threw its shot near or through a jib, which being conclusive, down went the ship's helm, and throwing her big topsail aback in token of submission, the little "Arago" was enabled to come up on her starboard quarter. Seeing her officers were trying to muster their men for a fight, our boarders were ordered

and a dash made for her mizzen rigging the moment the two vessels touched. It was all over in a minute as her men promptly retired to their forecastle and were locked in. A prize crew was left on board and the fine ship "Express" of New Orleans, with the stars and stripes once more at her gaff, was sailed into American waters. As the sun set the two vessels came into Eastport harbor to find many people assembled on the wharves and hillsides. The firing having been heard in the city, much curiosity and probably some little anxiety was felt on account of our very peculiar ship's company. But all is well that ends well. A bright young lawyer of Eastport, Mr. John H. French, who was present, dropped into poetry, of which these lines are recalled, in honor of his fair townswomen :

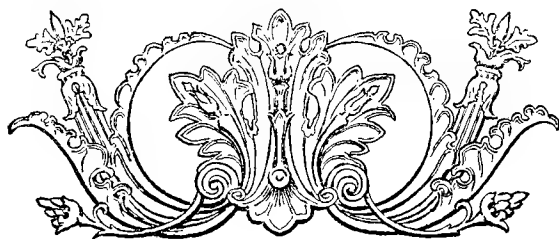
"O, for a forty music power to sing,
The well earned laud and praise of that big thing
When armed with flashing eyes and rosy lips
The Eastport women took the Southern ships.
Not that gay barge which sailed down Cydnus' tide
Could boast a fairer crew with all its pride,
Than did the ' Arago ' with her new recruits
In basquine uniform and patent boots,

In vain to struggle, see, the victory's won ;
Secessia's flag drops to the bright jupon."

On the next Wednesday, September 4, when the morning fogs had burned away, the lookouts sighted a ship off Grand Menan, which was soon run down and captured after firing across her bow once or twice. As this occasion was strictly a "gander party" there is but little to say thereon. She proved to be the "Alice Ball" from Liverpool and with her was taken the first Confederate flag we had then seen. It was a huge affair, some twenty-five feet long and of the "star and bar" pattern all were so familiar with later on. It went to Washington and, for aught I know, is buried in the archives of the Coast Survey office to this day.

The three ships were turned over to the United States marshal and sent to Portland for condemnation by the court of admiralty. Honorable George F Talbot was the United States District Attorney, and I well remember taking him off to the ships in Eastport harbor, for the purpose of making examination of such papers as the captains did not succeed in destroying during the chase, to question the crew, etc. His encouraging words, as we returned to shore, brought bright visions of prize money, "Castles in Spain," alas, to be thrown to the ground¹ by a few words in the court record : in effect, released by instruction from the Honorable Secretary of the Treasury.

¹ Or it might be said struck by departmental lightning.



THE BOYS OF 1861.

By Brigadier-General SELDEN CONNOR.

NOT very long ago I received a communication from an old soldier comrade who informed me that he had been appointed a committee of one by his post of the Grand Army to select an orator for Memorial Day. "I racked my brain," wrote he, "trying to think of somebody and finally I thought of you." As the result of a similar cerebral agitation I arrived at the theme of the simple and brief story I have to present to you this evening. It is the first paper our persistent and energetic committee has succeeded in goading me to attempt and I therefore thought I would commence logically and as children, the best judges of stories, always require their entertainers to do, "at the very beginning." I have no apology to make for writing largely "in the first person." Although my subject is a collective one I consider that I can best treat it by telling the story of that one of the boys of '61 I know best, believing it is typical of a large number of that of his comrades, and that the personal "saga," the plain narrative of individual experience, is of the greatest human interest and the best material for history.

I cast my first vote in September, 1860. Although it was the state election my vote virtually counted for Lincoln and Hamlin. Immediately after that election I was induced by two college friends in Woodstock, Vermont, one the teacher of the high school, and the other, a law student, to go to that beautiful village, known throughout the state as "Woodstock Green," and begin my law studies in the same office with my friend. Vermont duly rejoiced at the election of Lincoln, and then settled down to its usual quiet course. It is true that what with states seceding, senators and representatives withdrawing from Congress, the air filled with direful threats, prophecies of evil and all manner of "inductions dangerous," with much argument as to the "nature of the compact" and the true meaning

of the constitution, and misty with innumerable propositions, devices and suggestions for averting the imminent calamity,—the political situation was interesting, not to say lively. Still it seemed to be only a sharp game of politics differing in degree and intensity, but not in kind, from the same old game that had been played so many years. In fact the game had been for some years of an exceedingly intense and sensational character, and had been accompanied with bloodshed on the prairies of Kansas and on the floor of the Senate. To the student of history it may seem strange that the people of the North did not foresee the catastrophe to which the long, bitter struggle was swiftly tending and make preparation to meet it. But that people were of various minds, and events were as yet but leading up to that near day and occasion that should weld them together as one man and inspire them with one purpose, one glorious enthusiasm, one invincible determination. As I recall those days it seems to me that there was no marked apprehension of an approaching cataclysm in the affairs of the country. To Republicans the culmination of the strenuous political conflict seemed to have been reached in the election of Lincoln and the triumph of their party; that the demonstrations of the beaten party were intended to intimidate the victors sufficiently to procure concessions from them; and that when the President should have been inaugurated all opposition would cease or matters would be accommodated somehow as they had been in the past.

At any rate the war cloud was not dark enough to cast any gloom on the cheerful pages of Blackstone, or to so darken the moon as to prevent sleighing, coasting, and skating with the Vermont girls when opportunity offered itself. Referring to "the records," however, it appears that I was not entirely oblivious of the ferment that was going on in the country, especially in the South. One evening in January when my roommates had left our quarters to quiet and to me, the unwonted solitude had the effect to set me to developing, so to speak, a few verses which I sent to *Vanity Fair* the *American Punch* of that day, whose cartoons illustrating the political situation were very

powerful and attracted much attention. I quote them here not to establish my fame as a poet, but to show the spirit of the time and the accuracy of my prophetic vision. They were written apropos of the secession of South Carolina and appeared in the issue of *Vanity Fair* for the first week of February. Having in mind the formula that introduces the moral of the fables in the Latin studies of my school-days, I styled my little fable

"HÆC FABULA DOCET.

- "A slender vine on an old oak hung
And clasped its scaly rind ;
From trunk to top its pennons flung,
And laughed to scorn the wind.
- "And men, who passed the way along,
Admired, and oft would speak
Of the kindly law that gave the strong
To aid and shield the weak.
- "Indeed it was as fair a sight
As any in the land,
To see the puny parasite
Upborne by tree so grand.
- "One day the vine in anger said,
'My tendrils I'll untie,—
Alone, aloft I'll rear my head
And leave the oak to die.'
- "The winds were out, and strong they grew,
And hurtled through the air ;
They whistled and blew the old oak through
And laid its branches bare.
- "The tempest ceased ; its rage was o'er ;
Gaily the sun did shine ;
The sturdy oak stood as before,—
Low lay the lifeless vine."

The prophecy of my muse was based upon the contingency of persistence on the part of the vine rather than a belief that it had let go for good. The contingency became reality ; the

winds were out in great force ; the Union stood the shock and South Carolina was laid low.

Even after the inauguration there could have been little expectation of serious trouble ; any, at least, likely to affect me personally, because I was then making plans for the summer vacation. I proposed to an old college friend in Worcester that he join me in a trip to Moosehead Lake. He waited until the first call for troops and then answered my invitation by an invitation to me to join the Worcester company of militia in which he had enlisted. The firing on Sumter, April 12, and the President's call on the fifteenth, for seventy-five thousand troops, brought on a new order of things. It seemed as if the people had suddenly started up broad-awake from a deep slumber. Their thoroughly aroused indignation and patriotism could find no expression that seemed adequate. "The boys" found some vent for their feelings in perambulating the streets far into the night, singing with more zeal than melody, "Dixie," "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree," and such snatches of the old patriotic songs as any of them could remember. In a letter to a member of my family, dated the sixteenth, I wrote, "It is dull music, this law business, in such stirring times as have fallen upon us. Woodstock, in common with the rest of the North is alive to the realities that now face us. The war news produced a real intoxication. The only question is, 'Are you going to the war?' The 'Woodstock Light Infantry,' Captain Washburn, the senior member of the firm in whose office I am reading, the oldest and best company in the state, are making preparations to respond to the requisition. We learn to-night that four regiments are ordered from Massachusetts. While I write, eight P. M., Captain Washburn and his lieutenants are in the back office holding a 'council.' They have just received an order from Governor Fairbanks granting them a full supply of the new rifle-muskets. I try to read law, but I fear that I do not fully apprehend the text as I turn the leaves over, for visions of 'bristling bayonets' and 'ensanguined fields' often blur the print."

As soon as the call was made I was eager to enlist although none of my friends and associates in the town, with the exception of Captain Washburn, belonged to the "Light Infantry" or proposed to join it. I wrote home for permission and as soon as I received a God-speed signed by all my family, I enrolled myself in the company. I do not remember the exact date of my enlistment, but I find in a letter of mine dated April 23, that reference is made to my having enlisted. The motive that impelled me to enlist was that common to the most of the soldiers of the Union Army, the desire to avenge the insult to the flag and to maintain the integrity of the Union. It was, no doubt, sensibly intensified by the less laudable, perhaps, but no less human eagerness to take advantage of the opportunity to vindicate the quality of Yankee manhood and courage against the aspersions that Southerners were accustomed to cast upon it, boastfully arrogating the equality in prowess of one son of chivalry to anywhere from three to ten of the "Northern scum," according to the enthusiasm of the occasion. Like most of my comrades I was not an Abolitionist, but a Lincoln Republican, opposed to the extension of slavery but not advocating a crusade against it. Not that I thought of slavery as other than a blot on our civilization and a hindrance to the progress of our country, an institution injurious alike to slave and master, but love for the Union made its welfare the first consideration, and for that sake I was willing to see slavery let alone in its ancient habitat to await the chances of the future.

The thirst for glory and the novelty of the soldier's life would not have been sufficient of themselves to induce me to enlist. As a boy I had read and reread with breathless interest Headley's glowing stories of "Washington and His Generals" and "Napoleon and His Marshals," and I had the fondness common to most boys, for recitals of all sorts of adventures on land and sea. As a boy I had cheered for the victories of Winfield Scott and "Old Zach" in far-off Mexico, and had gazed in awe and admiration on the one bronzed veteran who visited my

native town immediately after the war, as a hero who had no doubt often personally encountered Santa Anna in the red glare of battle. I had never, however, seen more of the pomp and circumstance of war than that attending the holiday parade of a single company of militia, and had never had a temptation or an opportunity to indulge in the delights of drill. The outdoor, gypsy life of the soldier had positive and strong attractions for me. I did not "go for a soldier" out of "pure gaiety of heart," as the French say,—in a light and careless spirit,—but soberly and advisedly, as they are advised to do who contemplate entering the matrimonial arena. Impelled primarily by a sense of patriotic duty to enter the ranks, the secondary considerations were such as to make the thought of becoming a soldier full of delightfully thrilling sensations and anticipations. I felt as if I were "lining up" with the men of '76 and the legions that so nobly illustrated American valor at Buena Vista and Palo Alto, and had pleasurable visions of dwelling in the "tented field," and of bivouacs,—how finely that word sounded once and what a chill it strikes to the marrow now,—in the forest, by noble rivers, or on lonely hillsides,—of lodging like Walter Scott's soldier :

"The heath this night shall be my bed,
The bracken curtain to my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread."

I had, too, some curiosity, if not an ardent longing, to ascertain experimentally the sensation of facing death in battle and, perhaps, in the background of my day-dreams there was the outline of a hope that some "glint of glory" might strike my helmet. The whole loyal people were in a state of highly wrought exaltation, and it is hardly conceivable that the boys who came to the front could have maintained an exceptionally philosophic frame of mind. The "Woodstock Light Infantry" was an old company of the militia, and naturally enough its personnel underwent a rapid change as soon as there appeared to be a prospect of active service. The infirm, those who had

married a wife, all who had too much stomach for the march or too little for the fight, fell out promptly and their places were speedily filled by men from Woodstock and the surrounding towns. The company was soon filled to its maximum and numbered seventy-three enlisted men and three officers, as good men and true as ever shouldered a musket. The average age of the seventy-six was twenty-six years. Forty-one were twenty-four and under. The youngest was eighteen and the oldest man forty-three. No time was lost in preparing for service. Recruits were measured for their uniforms as fast as they came in, and were put to drill at once. Every day and all day we were exercised ; in the street when the weather was fair, in the armory when it was rainy. We had a great variety of drill, set-up, school of the soldier and of the company, bayonet exercise, skirmish drill, goose step, common time and double-quick. We were drilled a part of the time in Scott's Tactics, which had come down from the great Frederick and Napoleon. The Scott drill was very showy, especially the marching by the flank in two ranks with lock step, musket at the "carry," the butt resting in the left hand at the hip. We were drilled chiefly, however, in "Hardee," and we were well and thoroughly drilled. Our first sergeant, Sweet, had been a long time in the company and was an enthusiastic soldier and a fine drill officer. He was a shoemaker and always kept his musket handy, so that when he became cramped at the bench, he might "limber up" by putting himself through the manual. At the close of our three months' service Sergeant Sweet was commissioned a captain in the regular army.

We had also a drill officer while at Woodstock, Cadet Eayre, a Jersey boy, from the Vermont Military Academy at Norwich ; as soldierly a young fellow as any West Pointer, and an accomplished drill officer. The next time I met him, after our parting at Woodstock, was when our brigade at Gettysburg, coming on to the field immediately upon our arrival after the long march of the Sixth Corps, formed in rear of the Third Corps. Eayre, who was then adjutant-general of Burling's Brigade

of the Third Corps, was swept back with a crowd of broken troops. I recognized him and asked him what was the matter. "All gone to h——, and the rebs are close at our heels," was the reply. But the Twelfth Corps, whom we had seen double-quicking as we came on the field, had arrived in time to give moral support, and the Third Corps held its ground. The last time I saw Eayre was on the Sunday before the army set out on the campaign of the Wilderness. I had been calling on my friend, Colonel West of the 17th Maine, and he rode home with me. On the way back we picked up Eayre, who came along with us. We were speculating on the chances of the campaign opening and Eayre said, "I don't care how soon it opens or what becomes of me. I have just been home on leave and things did not go right there." Before the next Sunday he fell, shot through the head, and Colonel West and I both were wounded.

In a home letter of that time I find that "The Company marched to Dr. Clement's church (Orthodox) and were addressed in a real '76 patriotic sermon," and I add, "I saw a great many eyes glisten and some of the congregation sobbed outright." In the same letter I wrote, "The whole village is a military camp. Even the women and the little girls are at work to help us off." I remember how full of zeal the ladies were supplying us with articles useful and otherwise. I think I had three "havelocks." The common impression was that the sunbonnet invented by the great soldier of India was an almost indispensable article in the torrid climate of Virginia. We tried hard to think them useful and comfortable but gave it up after a short trial.

As an instance of the general good-will, John Pynx, a young blacksmith with whom I had a very slight acquaintance, presented me with a formidable "bowie" made by him from a file, in order that I might be properly "heeled" for the close work we were expecting, or expected, to encounter.

By industrious application and hard work under the exceptionally efficient instruction of Sergeant Sweet and Cadet Eayre we

had arrived at a fairly good condition of discipline and drill when the long-expected order came to repair to the rendezvous of the regiment at Rutland. The whole village assembled on "The Green" to see us off. Jacob Collamore, the well-known senator from Vermont, a citizen of Woodstock, gave us a send-off in a patriotic speech, and final leaves were taken over and again. Captain Washburn, in a voice somewhat husky and emotional, called for "Three cheers for the homes we leave behind us," and then we mounted the wagons that were to take us over the mountains and across the state, and started to "put down the Rebellion," fearing a little that it might be squelched before we got there, cheering and cheered till we were out of range. Everywhere along the road we were received with hearty acclamations, fervent good wishes and emphatic injunctions to "wipe out the rebels."

One little scene remains as a picture in my memory. Near the top of the Green Mountains a seven by nine schoolhouse stood near the road, and in front of it was a bevy of school children, boys and girls, decked out with red, white and blue, and two little fellows with fife and drum played "Yankee Doodle" for all they were worth, while the rest of the party cheered and waved their handkerchiefs. It struck me that they were genuine descendants of the Ethan Allen stock.

At Rutland we were encamped, with the other companies of the regiment, in "Sibley" tents, on a meadow near the town. The regiment was organized with J W Phelps as colonel, and our captain, Peter T Washburn, as lieutenant-colonel. Butler says in his "Book," — "Among the regiments that came to me was the 1st Vermont, under the command of Colonel Phelps, formerly of the regular army. He was one of the best soldiers I ever saw, and the finest man in every relation of life that I ever met, except one. He was an Abolitionist of the most profound, energetic and forth-putting type."

Colonel Washburn was one of the ablest lawyers in Vermont. He served only through the three-months' term of the regiment. He was adjutant-general of Vermont for 1864,

1865 and 1866, and subsequently governor of the state. The regiment in line looked somewhat like a patchwork quilt. Each company had its own style of uniform. Some were gray, some blue, and others a combination. There were dress coats, frock coats and jackets. The uniform of our company was neat and becoming, but stiff and old-fashioned, gray throughout; dress coat with white facings, a broad white stripe on the trousers, gray chasseur cap. We had no blouse or undress coat and therefore had to drill and work in full dress. The regiment was armed with new Springfield rifles fitted for the "Maynard primer," which was never used so far as I know. We were regularly equipped with knapsacks, haversacks and canteens.

From our going into camp on the second, until our departure, we were kept busy with drills, reviews, parades and guard-mountings. The camp attracted everybody, apparently, from the city and surrounding country; it was thronged with visitors, men, women and children. Their attentions gave the boys a little joke on me. One evening at roll-call they heard one of the spectators say, "Do you mind that tall fellow on the right? He is an Irishman. His name is Connor. I heard the name called plainly."

Thinking it a good thing to do in order to toughen ourselves for the work and hardships before us, some of us took a morning bath in the brook that ran near the camp. As a natural result I took a severe cold. The effects of that imprudent bath lasted for six months.

On the ninth of May the regiment was mustered into the service of the United States by Lieutenant-Colonel Rains of the regular army. The next day we took a train for New York. At Troy the regiment marched past the residence of General Wool and was reviewed by that veteran of the Mexican War, from the steps of his house. At Albany an old friend of my college days, John Flagg, subsequently mayor of the city, found me and so loaded me down with smokables and edibles that for a time I was very popular in my company. On our arrival in

New York we marched, company front, down Broadway to the Park Barracks. Every man had a spring of evergreen in his cap to mark him as a "Green Mountain Boy" and felt that it was incumbent on him to bear himself worthily of his illustrious forbears. Just enough regiments had preceded us to excite the patriotic enthusiasm of New York to the highest pitch of enthusiasm in welcoming us. The whole length of our route down Broadway the sidewalks were packed with people shouting, yelling, cheering, "hi-hi-ing," waving flags and handkerchiefs, and making such demonstrations as only a New York crowd is capable of doing.

Bunner, in his poem before the Society of the Army of the Potomac last year, well described the reception,—of which that to us was a good sample,—New York gave the passing regiments :

" The cheers of the crowd rise around them,
And run in a rattling roar
Down on each side of the column
And out like a fire before.
It swells by their side to a thunder
That hushes the beat of their feet,
It catches their cadence of marching,
And rolls it ahead down the street ;
" Down the whole length of the roadway
Through the throng of the thousands that wait,
Down goes the heralding thunder
As the troops march on in state.
And down where the Battery breezes
Are blowing through Bowling Green,
The men of New York are cheering
The troops that they have not seen."

Such an experience is memorable for a lifetime. The distinguished position I occupied on the right of the company subjected me to some exceptional hardships,—the common lot of greatness. The gutter was slanting and slippery and the crowd sometimes pressed upon us who were on the flank so

that we had to fend them off or break files. A heavy and unaccustomed knapsack pulling at my chest, together with the miseries of my cold, made breathing an act of heroic effort. Broadway seemed a very long way as well. Before we were half-way to the barracks I would have swapped the rest of the glory for a seat in any old hack, and given something to boot. We were quartered that night at the Park Barracks. The next day we had leave to go where we pleased until a certain hour when there would be a roll-call. First Sergeant Sweet invited several of the company to go to Castle Garden with him where Colonel Rush Hawkins, a Vermonter and an old acquaintance of his, was drilling his Zouaves. As we entered the gallery the Zouaves drilling on the floor greeted us with cheers for "Vermont." When we went away they geyed us good naturedly on our "steel-pen" coats, which were in such marked contrast to their easy jackets. A few weeks later Hawkins' Zouaves joined us at Newport News. It was the only regiment I remember to have seen marching to the music of a corps of buglers. I consider the old fife and drum the proper instruments for infantry, and I am glad to see that our army is getting back to them after a trial of trumpets.

At five o'clock in the evening of the eleventh, the 1st Vermont embarked on the steamer "Alabama" for Fort Monroe. In a letter home written with a pencil on a sheet of paper bearing the flag and shield in red, white and blue, with the legend, "It shall be defended,"—a good specimen of the patriotic stationery of those days,—and headed "On board the Alabama, May 12, 1861," I wrote as follows:

"Here we are off the coast of Delaware or Virginia, somewhere on our way to Fort Monroe, which we expect to reach at six to-night. We started from New York at five last night; have had beautiful weather, notwithstanding which nearly all have been sick, myself among the rest. I don't feel much like writing, but a messenger will return by this steamer and there is no regular communication with the Fort, and I thought I would drop you a line to inform you that 'I still live' though somewhat uncomfortably. I was sick when I

came on board, and the swells and the motions of the steamer are not invigorating in their tendencies. There was almost a mutiny on board last night. The men were tired, sick, hungry and sleepy, and no adequate arrangements had been made for our comfort. I wrapped myself in my blanket and lay down to try to sleep on the open deck ; but Colonel Washburn found me and made me share his own stateroom where I slept soundly the rest of the night."

We did not arrive that night but sometime the following day. The captain could not find the entrance to Chesapeake Bay in the night for the good reason that the lights on Capes Charles and Henry had been extinguished by the rebels. I remember all the miseries of that voyage, and especially how perverted the odors of tobacco smoke and coffee became to my blunted sense of smell. Those exhalations so fragrant to the normal sense were transmuted to the vilest stench imaginable.

At the fort we found the little garrison of regulars, three hundred and fifty strong, and the 3d and 4th Massachusetts Regiments which had preceded us a few days. We pitched our tents first in the close confines of the water battery, but the space was so narrow and the location so inconvenient, that after a few days we left our tents and occupied the Hygeia Hotel, which had been thoroughly dismantled by its owners so that we had to sleep on the floor, which was no improvement on the sand we had left. Our cook-tents were pitched in the front yard.

Referring to a letter written May 19, I find that we were real soldiers at that early period of our service, full of growls at the "grub." It seems to have been my good fortune to contribute something to the amelioration of the bill of fare. The letter says, "We have two cooks to a company. I posted ours on baking beans in woods style and the men are eager for more of 'Connor's beans' after one trial." I was considerate enough to add that we expected coarse food, but that it would be wholesome and sufficient in quantity,—that the full army ration would be satisfactory if we could only get it. The sea air and the unwonted exercise gave us stalwart appetites. Be-

sides drills, parades and guard duty with the regulars, there was much heavy fatigue, dragging "Columbiads" to their place of mounting, carrying water and rations, policing, etc. Dress parades were held on the broad, level parade inside the fort. The beauty of the parade and its surroundings and the effective lighting up of the long line of bayonets by the low sun striking across the ramparts made the spectacle one of the most pleasing in my memory. It was very interesting to me to be on duty as a private with regular soldiers. They were quiet, orderly, thoroughly disciplined men and did their duty promptly and cheerfully. The non-commissioned officers put on no disagreeable airs of authority; at the same time they gave orders as if they expected to be obeyed, and they were.

The twenty-third of May the 1st Vermont made the first reconnaissance made by any Union force into rebel territory. It had been rumored that General Magruder was assembling a rebel force at Hampton a few miles from the fort, and Colonel Phelps was ordered by Colonel Dimmick, the commandant of the fort, to take his regiment and investigate. At the first halt, Colonel Phelps, fearing perhaps that our short experience on the drill ground had not fully prepared us for the conditions of active service, called out in his high, thin voice, "If we have to form line you'll have to do it just as if there were no fences or anything in the way." As we marched along the road we were reminded of the stories of Concord and Lexington by seeing men unharness the horses with which they were plowing, mount them and ride away to give warning of our approach. Presently a young man wearing a military cap and mounted on a fiery white steed came down the road galloping furiously, drew up by the colonel's side and addressed him in a very excited manner, asking the meaning of this "invasion." The colonel answered that his intentions were entirely peaceful and that nobody would be hurt unless we were attacked. "I presume," said the herald, "that you will grant us the usage of war and give us time to remove the women and children." "Oh, let them stay," replied the colonel in his benevolent manner, "we

want to see them, too." The Virginian thereupon put spurs to his horse and rode back as furiously as he came. In a few minutes a dense cloud of smoke arose toward Hampton and the right company, which was the Swanton, was sent forward at the double-quick. They found that tar had been poured over the planks in the middle of the bridge leading to Hampton, and fired. The fire was extinguished by the time the regiment came up and it marched across without any halting or hesitation. At the farther end of the bridge a small howitzer was lying in the mud where it had apparently been dumped when it was seen that we meant business. As we marched into the town there was evidence of fear of the Yankees in the wagons hastily loaded with household articles. We learned afterwards that the inhabitants generally expected to be "butchered" by the barbarians and that the women and children were terror stricken and hid themselves everywhere. At the business center of the town the regiment was halted, brought to a front and arms were ordered. The darkies were grinning as if they enjoyed the situation, and the white men looked very black and tried to put on an unconcerned air as if they did not see any Yankees. Colonel Phelps, who had once been stationed at the fort, met and talked with several acquaintances, and then, after a few minutes' occupation of the town, faced us about and led us back. We were rather disappointed, not having found any rebels in arms, but we had rendered a service and for a time we had enjoyed the thrill of expectation of a scrimmage.

On our return we encamped, with several other regiments, on the shore of the mainland between the fort and Hampton. The only incident of that encampment was a call to arms caused by some mischievous or cantankerous mule on a "midnight tear." None of the other regiments had ammunition so a loud cry went up from them all of "Turn out, Vermont."

In the meantime General Butler had taken command, and by his order the 1st Vermont, 4th Massachusetts and the "Steuben Rifles," a German regiment from New York City, on the twenty-seventh of May embarked on steamers at the fort and

were taken to Newport News where we at once set about establishing the entrenched camp named after our commander, Camp Butler. It was a beautiful spot when we landed. Surmounting the scarped bank, covered with trees and shrubs, at the foot of which copious springs welled out all along the bank, making it a favorite watering-place for the men-of-war, we came to a broad level field covered with tall, waving wheat. The house of Mr. West, the owner of the field, was the only building in sight. We pitched our tents in the midst of the wheat and in a few hours there was a poor outlook for a crop. The place has undergone many changes since that day. Now it is the site of a flourishing new city and the terminus of a great coal railroad; and where the skiff of the oysterman used to be tied there is a great ship-building plant where they build battle ships cheaper than anywhere else in the whole country. The field works, traced by an engineer officer, were nearly crescent in form, both flanks resting on the river. On the bank there was a small battery of siege guns to protect the water front. My company flattered itself that its portion of the field work was the best on the line. We cut and "toted" for a long distance hard pine logs nearly a foot through and stood them on end close together in a trench, to form the revetment. The embankment was six feet high with a banquette. The earth was solidly tamped down and the ditch, seven feet deep and fifteen feet wide at the top, was set with sharp pointed stakes for spitting intruders.

This was our home during the remaining two months and more of our service. We had the usual round of drills, guard duty, fatigue, inspections and an occasional review, in preparation for which we early mastered the art of stuffing knapsacks with paper. The bathing was fine, and it was as good as an opera to visit the German camp and hear the fine singing which was going on in the street of some company every evening, in which every man of the company took part. Small scouting parties under an officer or non-commissioned officer were allowed to range the country in our front, and these expeditions were very popular because of the chance of adventure, of foraging for

tomatoes and other vegetables through the abandoned "truck" gardens, and of getting buttermilk and "pone" at the farm-houses. A party of our company one day made a sad discovery, the body of Dana Whitney, a member of the company, lying in the road riddled with buckshot. He was detailed in the quartermaster's office and that day he and the quartermaster of the German regiment had procured mounts and were riding along the road when they were bushwhacked. Whitney fell and the German escaped by leaving his horse and taking to the bush. In the report of the adjutant-general of Vermont the "casualties" of the regiment are reported as "six deaths; five disease, one accident." Poor "Dane!" I wonder where he comes in. Was that charge of buckshot a "disease," or an "accident?"

There were thirteen of us in our "Sibley" tent, all "six-footers." We had a brush shade in front with broad seats under it,—a true Southern "po'ch." The ration question we settled by sending to New York for groceries, and supplementing the cook's rations by cooking for ourselves in a very successful oven, which we had constructed of brick and clay. Some of the mess were ambitious amateur cooks and regarded nothing in the culinary line as impossible. We were hospitable within our limits and the rest of the company therefore had no occasion to be envious of our enterprise.

A section of Greble's Battery that had been sent with us from the fort was retained for the protection of the angles of our works. The force of regulars at the fort was so small that a sufficient number of men to man these guns could not be spared, and therefore twenty-four men were detailed from the 1st Vermont to learn the artillery drill under Corporal Peoples of the Battery. Peoples was a good-looking young Irishman, who had been some time in the service; a quiet, modest fellow and an efficient and faithful soldier. Later in the war he was commissioned a lieutenant in the regular service. I had a call from him in '64 or '65, when I was in Douglass Hospital, and his plain straps seemed to have transformed him into a "bigger man than old Grant."

I thought I was lucky to be put on the detail because, although we had to drill five hours a day, I wanted to learn the drill, and our detail was exempt from all other duty, and there was a good deal of shovel and pickax work going on just then. Perhaps I was lucky on the whole, but I questioned my good luck when a collision of my elbow with the sight of the piece a few days before "Big Bethel" so benumbed my arm that I could not handle a rifle for some time, and was in consequence prevented from marching with my company to that inglorious field. Lieutenant-Colonel Washburn, who was to command the Camp Butler contingent of the attacking force, sent for me the evening before the expedition was to start at an early hour of the morning, to come to his tent and take care of it in his absence. I assisted, as a listener merely, at a consultation Colonel Washburn had that evening with several officers who were to accompany him, among them Major Theodore Winthrop, who was so soon to fall. The next day we heard the guns and pictured to ourselves the horrible slaughter that was going on, and the wild rush of our boys over the rebel works. Towards evening I saw my company marching into its street, and with it was a wagon that seemed heavily laden. I went with slow, hesitating steps to meet them, fearful that some of my closest comrades might be among the dead and wounded who had probably been brought back in the wagon. On a nearer approach it seemed more like a peddler's cart than an ambulance. The load was the miscellaneous stock of some country store, the "spoils of war," everything from a saddle to a hoop skirt. The boys were all there, tired, but in good spirits. All there but one. Reub Parker did not answer at roll-call. At first there was little anxiety on his account. Perhaps he had got separated from the company in some way and would come in later. Days and weeks passed and there was no sign of his existence, and he was given up as probably killed in action. At home his funeral sermon was preached and his family put on mourning. One day two red-legged "Louisiana Tigers" came into camp under a white flag, and brought Reub with them in exchange.

He had been taken a prisoner to Richmond and had the honor to be the first guest of Hotel de Libby. He was looking as well as ever and had many stories to tell us of the curiosity of the people to see the Yankee, and of the uncourteous remarks addressed to him by his visitors.

On the march out there was a lively incident which was probably considered tragical by some of the participants. As the regiment was passing by a fine house in the gray of the morning, the owner, a rebel officer, who happened to be at home, was so angered at the sight of the Yankee invaders that he seized a rifle and fired at the column, the shot doing no other damage than perforating Sergeant Sweet's trousers. The column halted, and Adjutant Stevens and a squad of men burst into the house, and finding the officer who had with more pluck than discretion challenged so unequal a contest, the adjutant, a tall, powerful man, seized him by the collar, and holding him off, gave him a sound kicking. The men in the meantime put a feather bed under the piano and set fire to it and then the march was resumed, lighted up by the burning house.

Big Bethel was a blunder for which Ben Butler was primarily responsible. He tries to shift the responsibility in his book, but the memorandum of his arrangements which he gives is sufficient to convict him. Still, if there had been any soldier, like Greble or Winthrop, in command, the expedition would, no doubt, have been successful.

After Big Bethel there was no special excitement at our post. The usual routine was observed, and regiments came and went. Usually there were four or five regiments in the camp. Rumors of great things to come were as plentiful as in after days of the war. Now, General Butler was to be largely reenforced for an expedition against Yorktown or Richmond. Again, there was to be a combined military and naval movement against Norfolk, our neighbor across the bay. Occasionally there was a "scare" that an expedition was preparing at Norfolk against us, but the "Merrimac's" time had not yet come.

As the expiration of our term of service grew near, there was a project for sending us to the eastern peninsula, Northampton and Accomac Counties, but for some reason it was not carried out.

On the fourth of August the regiment embarked on the steamers "Ben de Ford" and "S. R. Spaulding" for New Haven. Thence it was conveyed by rail to Brattleboro, Vermont, where it arrived late in the evening of the seventh. The muster out was delayed for several reasons,—among them the important one of the non-arrival of the paymaster,—and was not made until the fifteenth and sixteenth, so that we served nearly four months from the commencement of drill in the companies. We were paid off in gold by Major Thomas H. Halsey, and then the First Vermont Infantry ceased to exist, and its component members scattered, to return to the field,—the greater number of them,—in other organizations. Six hundred of them reenlisted, and two hundred and fifty became commissioned officers. Of the Woodstock Company one attained the rank of brigadier-general of volunteers, another became colonel of the 6th Vermont, seven were captains and ten, lieutenants.

One of the proprietors of the grocery store we frequented when the company was organizing and drilling was Daniel Stearns, an old Mexican soldier, and formerly a resident of Skowhegan. "It makes me laugh," he used to say to us, "to hear you boys talking of getting out after your three-months service. You'll find that when you have begun to follow the drum you will have to keep on just as long as the music holds out." And we found it so.

For myself, I had greatly enjoyed my initiation into the soldier's life. I was glad that I had begun by carrying a musket and had received so good a training as a soldier in the ranks. The spirit of comradeship was strong in the company and there never was any strife or bickering among its members. I had a friendly regard for them all, and I made many friends, too, in other companies of the regiment. In the course of the war I

met many of my comrades of the 1st Vermont. On the way to Gettysburg we marched past the 16th Vermont, which under Veazey did such gallant service on that field, halted by the roadside, and three or four old messmates in the 1st Vermont, officers of the 16th, came out to see me. There was but one opportunity in the company for promotion, caused by the resignation of a lieutenant, and the advancement of the ranking non-commissioned officer left a vacancy for a corporal which was filled by my appointment. On being mustered out the offer was made me of a captaincy in Colonel Stoughton's Regiment then forming. I declined because I proposed to return to the field with men of my own state. Several weeks before the expiration of my service I was informed that a company had been raised in my native town, Fairfield, and that I had been chosen captain, and I was urged to get my discharge and take the company at once. I preferred, for some reason, to serve out my enlistment. I arrived in Augusta the twenty-first of August, and learned that my company had been assigned to the 7th Maine, and that, by some misunderstanding, both Captain T W Hyde, of the Bath Company, and I had been elected major. Governor Washburn arranged the matter by appointing me lieutenant-colonel. The 7th was mustered in the next day and left for Baltimore where I joined it a fortnight afterwards.

The first instalment of the boys of '61, the seventy-five thousand of the President's first call, constituted a limited association which was considered to have an option on putting down the Rebellion in ninety days. The new association was practically unlimited ; there was a chance for everybody who wanted to help and was willing to stand by the Union for three years at least. The events of the three months had given a more serious aspect to the situation. Yet with equal readiness the second instalment of volunteers enlisted under the flag, to suffer and to die under it, or to triumph with it.

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ERRATA.

After Gen. Chamberlain's article was printed he discovered several errors of the author, to which he desires to call attention. They are as follows :

Page 230, fifth line from bottom, seventh word, for *left* read *right*.

Page 231, sixth line from bottom, eighth word, for *his* read *Sheridan's*.

